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TIME





CONTENTS

7

The Brief

21

The View

28

Trump Ascendant

Optimism at the RNC in the wake of the assassination attempt
By Eric Cortellessa and Brian Bennett

34

A Call to Rise Above

Reasons to be hopeful about unity—even as American politics continues to divide
By Nancy Gibbs

36

At a Boiling Point

For those who study political violence, the attack on Trump was shocking but not surprising
By Vera Bergengruen

73

Time Off

42

Server Harms

The arrival of a Bitcoin mine in a Texas town heralded a wave of mysterious health concerns
By Andrew R. Chow

48

Dr. Mom

Parenting experts are scoring followers with a mix of personal stories and professional cred
By Eliana Dockterman

54

Globe-Trotting

Our annual list of the World's Greatest Places spans the earth with 100 exciting places to visit and stay

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*Signs at a property across the street from the Wolf Hollow Data Site in Granbury, Texas
Photograph by Jake Dockins for TIME*



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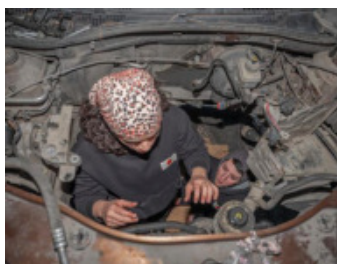
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Iran's defiant women

Photojournalist Forough Alaei traveled her native Iran documenting the women, like those seen here, whom she sees as “Iranian role models.” In a society that restricts women’s choices, Alaei spotlights some of the thousands who represent the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement. See all the photos at time.com/women-iran



Clockwise from top: Sahar Rashidi, 31, kickboxing champ; Azam Sanaei, 34, captain and assistant coach of Iran’s women’s ice hockey team; Kiana Yarahmadi and Niloofar Farahmand, 33, car mechanics; Elnaz Rekabi, 34, climber

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On the covers



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Illustration by Alessandro Gottardo for TIME



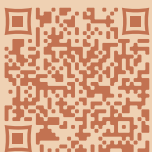
COVERS ON TIME.COM

On June 28, following the first debate of the U.S. general election, we published a digital-only cover story on Democrats’ panic. Read it at time.com/biden-panic. Another digital-only cover was released July 18, for the essay by Nancy Gibbs featured in this issue.

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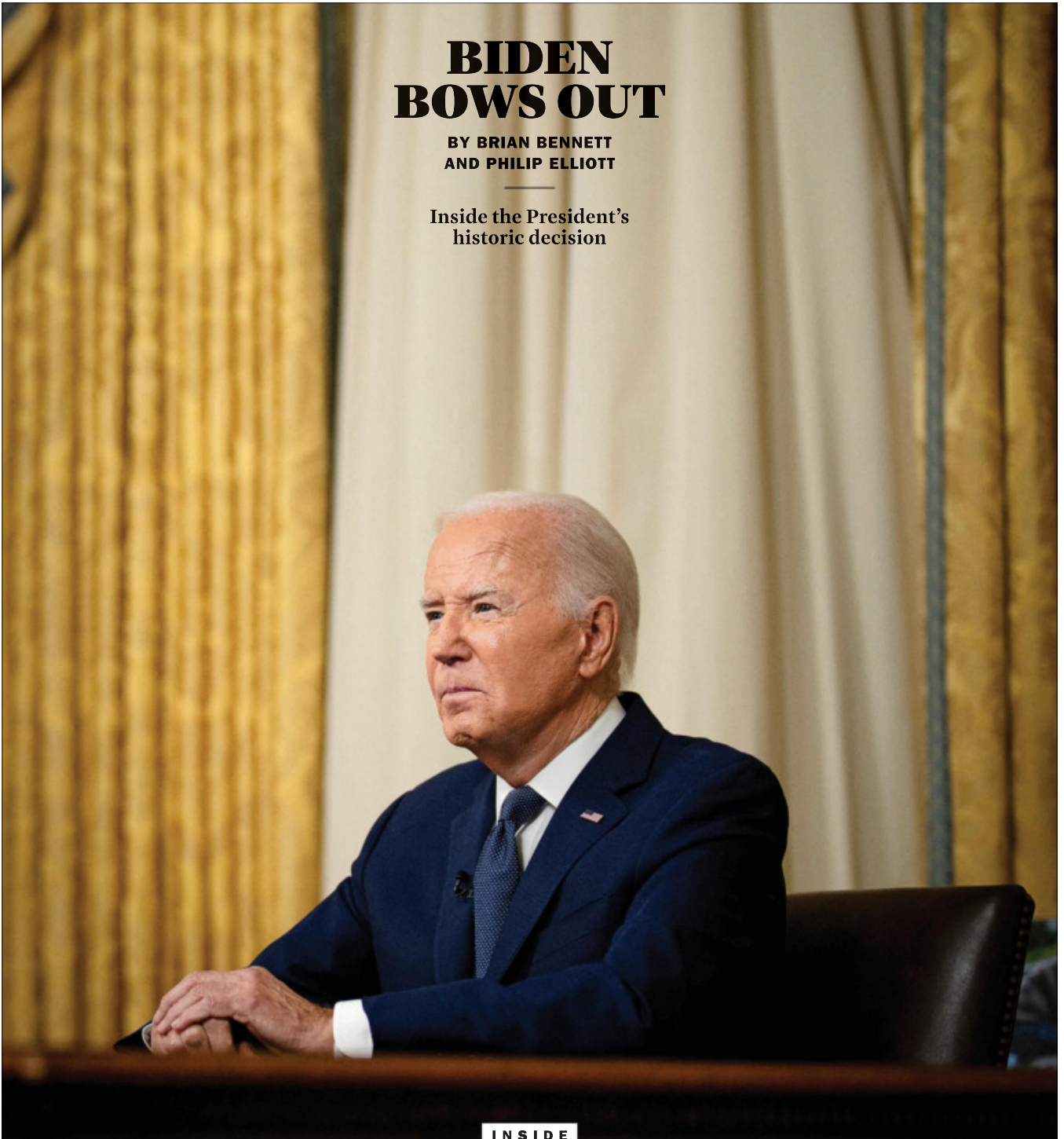


The Brief

BIDEN BOWS OUT

BY BRIAN BENNETT
AND PHILIP ELLIOTT

Inside the President's
historic decision



INSIDE

WHAT THE WORLD SAW AT
INDIA'S WEDDING OF THE YEAR

REMEMBERING SHANNEN DOHERTY,
ICON OF THE 1990S

THE MAN WHO CHANGED HOW
THE WORLD THINKS ABOUT TRAUMA

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF

IT TOOK NEARLY A HALF-CENTURY FOR JOE BIDEN to rise to the pinnacle of American politics, an ascent haunted by tragedy and capped by triumph. The fall, in comparison, felt brutally fast.

Just weeks after a disastrous debate spurred a dramatic revolt within his own party, Joseph R. Biden Jr., the 46th President of the United States, caved on July 21 to concerns among Democrats about his dwindling re-election chances, dropping out of the contest against former President Donald Trump. The dramatic decision upends the 2024 race and sets the stage for a frantic scramble to Election Day.

“It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President,” Biden wrote in a letter posted on social media a little before 2 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon. “While it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term.” In a separate post issued minutes later, Biden threw his support for the Democratic nomination behind Vice President Kamala Harris.

Since the June 27 debate against Trump deepened questions about the President’s mental acuity and his ability to campaign and govern, dozens of the party’s elected officials had urged Biden, 81, to withdraw. Biden stubbornly defied those calls, bristling at the uprising and determined to forge ahead. He was 100% all in, aides insisted—until suddenly he wasn’t.

The historic decision makes Biden the first sitting President to cancel his re-election campaign in over half a century, when Lyndon Johnson announced in March 1968 he would not accept the Democratic Party’s nomination amid disapproval over his handling of the Vietnam War. Biden’s departure opens the door for Harris or another younger Democratic leader to vie for the top job against the 78-year-old Trump, depending upon how Democrats decide to replace him. And while Biden’s preference still carries influence among many party loyalists, there’s hardly a guarantee that a party willing to denigrate its leader will take its cues from the President any longer.

IT CANNOT HAVE BEEN easy for a man who fought most of his life for the power of the presidency to relinquish it now, in a diminished state and under difficult conditions. Biden did not want to go. Pushing through adversity had become a defining characteristic of his identity. He saw the mounting concerns about his age as another hurdle to get over.

To understand the deliberations of the President as he weighed whether to step aside, it helps to trace the path that led him here. No sooner had Biden been elected to the Senate in 1972 than he suffered the death of his wife and daughter in a car crash. Fifteen years later, his first run for the White House ended abruptly after he delivered a debate argument pilfered from a British politician. As the plagiarism scandal snowballed, Biden’s inner circle—many of whom still occupy positions in his orbit today—urged him to exit. Even now, Biden has regrets that he heeded his advisers over his family, who urged him not to quit.

The experience colored Biden’s contempt for both the press and his critics. He sees the elitists in Washington working



^
The President watches Harris speak at a campaign rally in Philadelphia in May

against him. To bow to the calls for him to end a storied career would be tantamount to admitting he wasn’t up for the task, and he believed he was. For Biden, it meant reliving 1987 all over again.

But Biden’s dismissal of the Democrats’ doubts as a Beltway phenomenon was inaccurate. Americans long had doubts about Biden’s age. An Associated Press–NORC poll last summer found 77% of adults believed Biden was too old to govern effectively through a second term. The debate with Trump cemented that perception. Democrats were shaken to watch Biden stumble his way through, mixing up names and figures, losing his train of thought, failing to parry Trump’s lies or give coherent descriptions of his own accomplishments and vision for a second term.

Unable to push him out, many frustrated Democrats stayed silent, either too timid to declare the President could no longer lead the ticket or unsure whether Harris would fare better. But in the days and weeks that followed, a growing chorus of Democratic lawmakers and donors sounded the alarm, warning that Biden was likely to lose in November, potentially dragging down the party’s candidates

‘It’s up to the President to decide if he is going to run.’

—NANCY PELOSI



across the country and handing the House and Senate to Republicans.

Biden insisted he would stay in the race and worked overtime to shore up pillars of support within the party, from union leaders to the Congressional Black Caucus. For a moment, it looked like Biden had quelled the dissent. Then his longtime ally Nancy Pelosi gave the ditch-Biden effort fresh momentum. “It’s up to the President to decide if he is going to run. We’re all encouraging him to make that decision, because time is running short,” the 84-year-old former House Speaker said of her 81-year-old President, speaking as if Biden hadn’t been promising to stay in the race. It was a remarkable diptych—one octogenarian determined to cling to power, even when his capabilities had flagged; another who had voluntarily surrendered it, and yet retained the clout to clip the President of the United States’ campaign when he became a political liability.

As the party fretted, a string of appearances designed to showcase Biden’s strength did little to quell doubts. Polls showed him trailing across battleground-states. Prominent donors began abandoning him or recalibrating their investments.

Discussion of his apparent cognitive decline dominated the news. Stan Greenberg, who was Bill Clinton’s pollster and who had previously touted Biden’s re-election chances, repeatedly petitioned the White House to take his current peril more seriously. Other party strategists were similarly concerned that the campaign was ignoring a crisis situation for both the President and the down-ballot candidates across the country whose fortunes were tethered to his. Reliably Democratic states were suddenly trending purple.

Then shots rang out across a fair-ground in Butler, Pa., on July 13, and a gunman’s attempt to kill Donald Trump sent shock waves through the country.

MOMENTS BEFORE TRUMP was shot, Biden had slipped into St. Edmond Catholic Church near Delaware’s Rehoboth Beach boardwalk just as Saturday-evening services were slated to start. Soon, news broke of the shooting. Biden was hustled out of the building, a black baseball hat over his shock of white hair, to receive word that his predecessor had been the target of an apparent assassination attempt.

Biden sprang into action and set into motion his return to Washington. He got his national-security team on the phone and peppered aides with questions. He soon spoke with Trump, and had addressed the nation three times by the following night. His campaign halted political activities in deference to the sensitivity of the moment, even as aides acknowledged that his opponent’s staring down a bullet would only intensify the MAGA movement’s ardor and maybe strengthen Trump’s advantage in the race.

The Trump shooting barely put the debate over Biden’s age on pause. Both House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries and his Senate counterpart, Chuck Schumer, had told Biden directly that their caucuses harbored deep concerns about his candidacy. Pelosi, too, told Biden that his refusal to bow out jeopardized Democrats’ ability to hold the Senate and retake the House.

Then, during a campaign swing through Nevada, Biden was diagnosed with COVID-19, and retreated to his beach house in Rehoboth to convalesce. To a tightened circle of advisers, he blasted Democratic donors for trying to push him out of the race, stewed at the lack of credit accorded to his achievements, seethed at the disrespect from purported allies and old friends. But even close allies knew he had all but run out of road, and was beginning to mull an exit in earnest.

Buoyed by the iconic images of his near assassination and show of strength in response, Trump emerged from the Republican convention ascendant. An Associated Press poll released that same day found that 7 in 10 voters thought Biden should withdraw from the race—including 65% of Democrats. Party leaders were no longer willing to muffle their panic.

Now Biden’s decision to bow out resets the race. Trump’s campaign, tooled to mock, deride, and defeat Biden, is scrambling to rethink their approach to the electoral map. Democrats will try to capitalize on the fresh start, banking that a new candidate at the top of their ticket will energize the base. But who that might be is an open question.

Even before Biden endorsed his running mate to top the new Democratic ticket, the easiest path forward for the party was to swap in Harris, who quickly announced that she would seek the nomination. Passing over the first woman and first person of color to fill the vice presidency would be politically tricky for a party that relies on those constituencies at the ballot box. Unlike other replacements, Harris would face no trouble tapping into the ticket’s war chest. Biden has said he wouldn’t have picked Harris for Vice President if he didn’t think she would make a strong President.

But party bigwigs are eager to start fresh. For weeks, some have been drawing up and circulating notional plans for a truncated nominating contest that would culminate at the party’s convention in Chicago in August. The Democrats, and America, are in uncharted territory now. □



Madrid mania

A red blaze illuminates a crowd of Spain's soccer fans in Madrid, as they cheer on Nico Williams' opening goal during a screening of the Euro 2024 final on July 14. Spain went on to best England with a 2-1 win in Berlin, clinching the title and scoring 15 goals over seven games—a record for a European tournament.

THE BULLETIN

Behind the opulence of Anant Ambani's big fat Indian wedding

THE WEDDING CELEBRATIONS FOR the son of Asia's richest man culminated in a lavish, celebrity-filled three-day gathering that came to a close in Mumbai on July 14. Mukesh Ambani, chairman of India's largest conglomerate, Reliance Industries, hosted festivities over seven months for his son Anant Ambani's marriage to pharmaceutical heiress Radhika Merchant.

STAR-STUDED Decked out in glamorous Indian attire, guests included global power players from across the entertainment industry, business world, and political elite. The nuptials are estimated to have cost nearly \$600 million and guests included celebrities Kim Kardashian, John Cena, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, and

Nick Jonas. Former British Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Tony Blair, as well as India's leader Narendra Modi, were also in attendance. Pre-wedding events attended by Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Ivanka Trump, and Jared Kushner featured performances by Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, and Andrea Bocelli.

ROYAL TREATMENT The senior Ambani, who has a net worth of nearly \$122 billion, has close ties with the Modi administration. For pre-wedding festivities in March, Indian authorities temporarily upgraded Jamnagar airport's status from

domestic to international, with staff, military, and air force personnel deployed in service of the Ambanis. In July, officials restricted access to roads around the wedding venue in Mumbai.

JARRING INEQUALITY Ambani's display of wealth is seen by many as a sign of India's rising global power, and aspirational for Indian families dreaming of a big wedding of their own. But the opulence has also caused discomfort for some who see it as a reminder of the stark income inequality in India, where the richest 1% own around 40% of the country's wealth.

—ASTHA RAJVANSHI



FANS: ANDREA COMAS—AP; AMBANI: HEMANSHI KAMANI—REUTERS



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5 reasons to start walking backward

BY ANGELA HAUPT

I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE happily walking in one direction: forward. It was, I believed, the only way to go, so I dutifully logged dozens of miles a month looking like every other person out for a morning stroll.

No more. Thanks to TikTok, I discovered a new (to me, at least) spin on walking: retro-walking, also known as retro-walking. Though it's trending on social media platforms right now, physical therapists and fitness trainers have been touting its benefits for years. It's a low-impact way to burn calories, strengthen your legs, test your coordination, become more flexible, and even reduce pain, experts say—all of which lured me onto my quiet rural street one afternoon to give it a whirl.

After about 50 steps, I realized going in reverse was no walk in the park. It burned. I could feel the switch-up in my lower legs in a way I don't with ordinary walking unless I'm powering up a hill. There was a mental challenge too (beyond ignoring the strange looks from my neighbors). I had no idea what was behind me, so I had to engage all my senses to ensure I stayed upright and didn't trip over any unexpected obstacles.

When I told a handful of experts about my surprisingly fun retro-walking expedition, they agreed more people should make it part of their routine—starting out slowly, in a hazard-free area, for just a few minutes a day. There's a learning curve, experts stress, so if you're able to walk 1 m.p.h. backward, you're doing well.

Here's a look at the benefits.



1. It's actually great for older people

Part of the appeal of walking backward is that it's suitable for people of any age and fitness level. It mitigates the impact of each step, reducing the force exerted on the knees and lower back. "It's great for your balance and coordination," says Joe Meier, a Minnesota-based personal trainer. That's especially important for older adults, who are at a higher risk of falls. For a safe way to start, get on the treadmill backward without turning it on, grasp the handrails, and use your own power to move the belt.

2. You'll engage different muscles

Walking backward requires you to stand up straighter than you do when walking forward, says Meier. By reversing your stride, you'll create a new challenge for the muscles in the abdomen, lower limbs, glutes, and back, since they'll be working opposite of how they usually do. According to one study—yes, scientists have studied this—people who walked backward three times a week for six weeks ended up with better quadriceps strength compared with those who walked forward for their exercise.



3. It can be good for people with injuries

Retro-walking has long been used for clinical and rehabilitation purposes, says Janet Dufek, a biomechanist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. One study found that after six weeks of doing it, people with osteoarthritis in the knee had a bigger drop in pain and functional disability compared with those who walked in the typical way. Others have found that backward walking alleviates plantar fasciitis and lower-back pain. Retro-walking is also used in occupational therapy. Older people might practice walking up to a kitchen sink, for example, then backward away from it. The ability to move in reverse can enhance "practical activities of daily living," Dufek says.

4. It could make you more flexible

Many of us sit all day long—which leads to coiled-up, restricted muscles. "Our hip flexors, or the muscles at the front of the thigh and the front of the hip, get tighter," says Kristyn Holc, a physical therapist with Atlantic Sports Health Physical Therapy in Morristown, N.J. When we walk backward, we're stretching that tissue—leading to more flexibility, which is linked to improved physical performance, increased muscle blood flow, and a reduced risk of injuries.



5. Your gait might improve

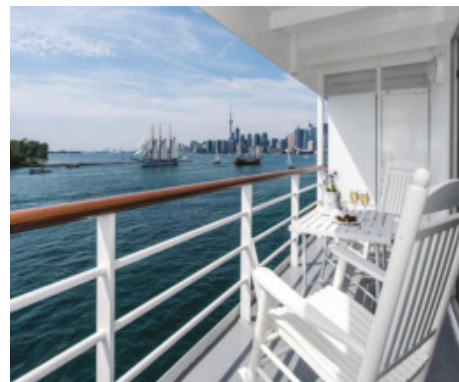
Elizabeth Stroot, a physical therapist with Core Wellness & Physical Therapy in Alexandria, Va., uses retro-walking to help people normalize their gait pattern, or how they walk. "It's a way to tap into our neuromuscular programming and get people to work through a little limp or a range-of-motion restriction," she says. Walking backward for just 20 or 30 ft. at a time is often enough to help some patients, she adds. It can also improve balance control, Holc says. When you can't see what's behind you, you must instead rely on your muscles, joints, and vestibular system to keep you upright. "You're having to feel where you are in space, and that information is being sent to the brain," she says.



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GOOD QUESTION

Why is Modi embracing Putin?

BY ASTHA RAJVANSHI

HOURS BEFORE INDIA'S PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi landed in Moscow on July 8, Russia fired missiles on Ukraine that killed at least 41 people, including four children at a children's hospital in Kyiv. Condemnations were still arriving from around the globe as Modi smiled and posed for photos with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

During Modi's two-day visit to the Kremlin—his first trip to Russia since its invasion of Ukraine in 2022—the two leaders hugged each other outside Putin's residence before holding informal talks. Putin told Modi he was “very happy” to see his “dear friend,” according to Russia's TASS state news agency, while Modi called the visit a “wonderful opportunity to deepen ties” between the two countries in a post on the social media platform X. In response, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called Modi's visit “a huge disappointment” on X, saying it was “a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow.”

It became clear that Modi did not plan to challenge Putin over his actions in Ukraine during the visit, and instead used the trip to affirm long-standing strategic and economic ties between the two countries. The Indian leader's engagement appears to be in part an attempt to stem the Kremlin's dependence on China, India's main rival, while he continues to walk a tightrope between the East and the West.

Last June, Modi met with U.S. President Joe Biden during a state visit to Washington, where the two leaders deepened relations with a defense, trade, and technology partnership and shared concerns about China's influence in the region. Despite facing pressure from the West to distance itself from Moscow, however, India has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and abstained from all resolutions on Ukraine at the U.N. Instead, Modi has opted for a softer approach, telling Putin that “today's era is not an era of war” on the sidelines of a regional summit in 2022.

EXPERTS SAY MODI'S VISIT, which occurred at the same time as NATO meetings in Washington, is focused primarily on defense cooperation. It came after Putin's return from Kazakhstan, where the Russian President claimed

during a regional summit that Moscow-Beijing relations were experiencing “the best period in their history.” This relationship has raised concerns for India as tensions with neighboring China have heated up in recent years over a disputed Himalayan border, which has resulted in India's becoming increasingly estranged in forums where Russia and China play a prominent role.

As such, Russia's stance on India-China hostilities in the future will be critical, says Chietigj Bajpae, a senior research fellow for South Asia at Chatham House, especially given India's heavy reliance on Russia for military equipment that dates back to the height of the Cold War. “Historically, Moscow has taken a relatively neutral position, but if this were to change, it

would prompt New Delhi to rethink its relations with Russia,” he says.

India's purchase of large quantities of Russian crude oil at steep discounts has resulted in trade between the two countries amounting to nearly \$65 billion in the past year. This is a major financial lifeline for Russia given sanctions and isolation from the West. Most of that money has flowed toward Russia, however—a trade imbalance that Modi addressed

during his talks with Putin. “Energy cooperation is an important issue, arising not only from India's dependence on Russian crude oil, but also civil nuclear cooperation,” says Bajpae.

As India seeks to promote a worldview that is “non-Western, but not explicitly anti-Western,” according to Bajpae, it's likely the friendship between India and Russia will endure. “For India, Modi's meeting with Putin in Russia is just a continuation of long-standing strategic ties dating back to the Cold War,” says Derek Grossman, a senior analyst at the Rand Corp. “But for the U.S. and West, it reminds everyone how difficult it is to enlist New Delhi in a coalition to counter Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In short, it won't happen.” □

▼
Modi and Putin at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow



Russia's China ties make India nervous

DIED



Shelley Duvall

Offbeat ingenue

Shelley Duvall swept onto film screens of the '70s and '80s, having had no previous acting experience when director Robert Altman cast her in six consecutive movies. Best known for starring in *The Shining* opposite Jack Nicholson, Duvall died July 11 at 75.



Richard Simmons

Mover and shaker

Magnetic exercise revolutionary Richard Simmons died July 13 at 76. With his radically upbeat and accepting workout approach, Simmons aerobized his way into viewers' hearts during his show and beyond—tank top, shorts, and all.



Dr. Ruth Westheimer

Beloved sex adviser

On a first-name basis with the country, Dr. Ruth gave frank answers to intimacy questions, catapulting to fame and radio syndication as America's sex therapist. Westheimer, who wrote 45 books about sexuality, died July 13 at 96.



DIED

Shannen Doherty

The quintessential Gen X girl

SHANNEN DOHERTY EPITOMIZED THE EXPERIENCE OF GROWING up female in the '90s. Like her iconic *Beverly Hills, 90210* character, Brenda Walsh, she contained a volatile mix of Gen X angst, teen fragility, and feminist grit. A porcelain-skinned, dark-haired drama queen in a world of tan, blond Valley Girls, Doherty owned her angry-young-woman identity before Courtney Love made it a trend.

Celebrity was not always kind to Doherty, who died July 13 at 53 after a nine-year struggle with breast cancer. A child actor with a decade-long résumé when Fox's *90210* debuted in 1990, she rocketed to fame as the teen soap rose in the ratings. Tabloids sank their fangs into the young cast, slotting 19-year-old Doherty into the role of villain. Called out for partying, her tumultuous love life, and reportedly imperious behavior on set, she was let go after four seasons.

But she made the most of her time there. Infused with Doherty's preternatural fire, Brenda was a moody brat but also an earnest romantic. Her self-righteous smirk, withering glare, and mischievous grin captured the emotional extremes of adolescence. Not long after *90210* emerged, female-dominated punk bands like L7, Bikini Kill, and Hole stormed the rock mainstream—and Doherty's performance began to look not just inspired, but also prescient.

For better or worse, *90210* defined her career. But she had fun with her image after leaving the show, in indie movies from *Mallrats* to *Nowhere*. On the supernatural drama *Charmed*, her feisty witch was killed off after three seasons amid reports of clashes on set. She was in and out of the spotlight in the 21st century, joining her *90210* castmates for a tongue-in-cheek revival even as she fought cancer. That she and *90210* co-star Luke Perry would both die young feels tragic enough to come from the melodramatic mind of the character from whom Doherty's identity proved so inextricable. It's a small consolation that we'll remember them at their most romantic, as two teenage rebels with the world at their feet. —JUDY BERMAN

CONVICTED

New Jersey **Senator Bob Menendez** on **all 16 counts** at his corruption trial, on July 16, by a jury that found him guilty of charges including bribery and acting as a foreign agent for Egypt.

OPENED

An investigation by FIFA into **racist and homophobic chants** by Argentinian soccer players after their July 14 Copa America win. The songs featured insults about French players with African heritage.

ANNOUNCED

That **Israel will start drafting ultra-Orthodox Jewish men**, the country's military said July 16, after a Supreme Court order that called religious exemptions discriminatory.

ROBOTIZED

One aspect of **baseball umpiring, as early as the 2026 season**, the MLB commissioner said July 16. The league aims to test using a robot umpire during challenges at spring training.

PROMISED

The relocation of **SpaceX and X (formerly Twitter) headquarters to Texas** from California, in protest of the latter's state politics, by Elon Musk in a July 16 post on X.

PRESENTED

The men's singles **Wimbledon tennis trophy to Carlos Alcaraz**, by **Catherine, Princess of Wales**, on July 14, in her second public appearance this year since announcing her cancer diagnosis.

HEALTH

The complicated work of treating trauma

BY BELINDA LUSCOMBE

DR. BESSEL VAN DER KOLK HAS SPENT 30 YEARS FIGURING out why people behave so strangely. His specialty is treating those who have endured traumas so horrific—war, carnage, incredible pain that they couldn't stop—that their brains have not been able to fully process them, and their bodies have reacted to their brain's precarious state in ways they could not explain or control. But many human behaviors still puzzle van der Kolk, 82. He doesn't understand why the medical community doesn't take childhood trauma more seriously. He doesn't understand why leaders still send citizens to war without factoring in how it will deplete their capacity to live normally for decades. And he's not quite sure why a woman recently came up to him on the street and kissed his feet.

"I said, 'What are you doing?'" says van der Kolk via video call from his home in the Berkshires. Van der Kolk's is a specific type of fame. Most people haven't heard of him, but for those who began to understand why they—or someone they loved—behaved the way they did via his 2014 book, *The Body Keeps the Score*, he's a miracle worker. Hence the foot-kissing.

In the book, the psychiatrist, who was born during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, makes the case that trauma is more present and more powerful than people realize. He argues that while trauma injures the brain, its effects go much deeper. "Trauma victims cannot recover," he writes, "until they become familiar with and befriend the sensations in their bodies." *The Body Keeps the Score* is not a self-help book; it is a summary of the scientific advances in understanding and treating trauma in the past century and why van der Kolk believes medicine is still not grappling with it effectively. But for many readers, it was an epiphany. As the book has lingered atop best-seller lists for the past five years, trauma has been elevated from a subject discussed mostly in the medical and military communities to a feature of the national conversation.

In fact, many people—including the book's author—have begun to caution that trauma is being redefined in unhelpful ways. "People are inflating the whole trauma notion and now apply it to everything," says van der Kolk. "When somebody breaks up with you in a love relationship, that's part of life, but that is not a trauma. What's happening in Gaza, that's a trauma." He also dismisses the notion that his book became popular five years after it was published because of the trauma of the pandemic. "My take on this is that I owe a lot of it to President Trump," he says. "When we saw brutality enter our political arena, a lot of people got triggered and [felt] like, 'Oh, that's what my upbringing was about; somebody treated me very badly and hurt me.'"

As the book climbed the charts, van der Kolk—who has also run the Trauma Research Foundation in Massachusetts



▲
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk has ruffled industry feathers by redefining trauma treatment

since 2018—has noticed that he's invited to more speaking engagements, but fewer hospitals or universities. "Institutions, by and large, have not embraced the book," he says. Clinicians, however, have. Laurie Marcellin, a therapist in Colorado, says it's one of the four top books she recommends as a supervisor for new therapists. "It's amazing, given the amount of years it's been out, that the book is still considered foundational," Marcellin says. She's more cautious about recommending it to clients because it can be triggering in its specificity. "I once heard someone say, 'It's like someone opened my mail,'" she says.

VAN DER KOLK parts company with established medical tradition on several key issues. Some of the treatments he recommends are unconventional. He's a proponent of using MDMA—also known as the street drugs ecstasy or Molly—to help people debilitated by trauma. (He currently uses ketamine instead, because unlike MDMA, it's legal to prescribe.) "When you get



traumatized, you live in a very narrowed reality, and your fear and your rage really determine your reaction to everything,” he says. “Psychedelics have the capacity to open up people’s minds to live in a much larger reality.”

In his most recent study, published in January, van der Kolk treated 46 traumatized people with psychotherapy and MDMA and 44 with psychotherapy and a placebo. He says he was shocked by the results. “After the MDMA, people were much better able to both articulate their own point of view and understand other people’s point of view, and to not get into fights but find the ability to compromise,” he says. Best-seller influence can get you only so far, however. While Australia and the Netherlands have announced MDMA programs, the experts at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are advising against recommending it.

Other less-than-orthodox treatments he recommends include activities that can help people feel in step with others, including dancing, drumming, and choir, as well as in step with

**‘People are
inflating
the whole
trauma
notion.’**

—DR. BESSEL
VAN DER KOLK,
PSYCHIATRIST

themselves, such as yoga and breath work. The current system, he says, “where you talk about how bad you feel or you take drugs, needs to be vastly expanded [to be like] the way we raise small kids, which is to have the experiences of discovery and pleasure and connection, not talking about your trauma, just to be in sync with other people.” He’s a big fan of drama therapy. “It is really good for people to inhabit different creatures than who they usually are,” he says.

For some clinicians, the book’s out-of-the-box thinking is what makes it appealing. “I think that we’re pretty stuck in psychiatry for some things,” says Dr. Chuck Weber, co-founder and chief medical officer of Family Care Center, a national chain of mental-health providers that treats a lot of ex-military PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) sufferers. One of the book’s techniques he uses is therapeutic massage for people whose trauma means they can’t bear to be touched. The hope is that it can retrain the brain to associate touch with different memories.

While the health industry has yet to fully embrace many of these treatments, van der Kolk is seeing progress on the front line, including in schools and prisons; San Quentin has a program based loosely on the practices encouraged by *The Body Keeps the Score*. “It’s an astounding thing to see the criminal-justice system actually having a trauma model,” says van der Kolk. “It made me very optimistic.”

It’s entirely plausible that van der Kolk’s views of health care institutions have been colored by events in his own history. In 2018, he was dismissed from the first trauma center he founded, amid allegations of bullying, which he strongly denied. He also bristles at the mention of the highly influential Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The DSM describes and encodes all known psychiatric disorders. It’s often key to getting health insurers to pay for a treatment. Despite what van der Kolk believes is overwhelming evidence that children who suffer from persistent trauma because of an absent, abusive, or unwell parent need particular help, the only trauma in the DSM is PTSD. “I have spent too much time in my life trying to change the DSM,” he says, ruefully. “Innumerable research papers—I’m not doing it anymore.” Instead, he is writing a workbook based on his theories.

He’s also hoping his work has an impact on an institution close to children: schools. His recommendations for how to make up for pandemic losses are, unsurprisingly, mildly heretical. Most school systems are leaning into extra instruction time and tests to catch kids up in reading and math. Van der Kolk says that’s all wrong. “The main thing you learn in school is to be a member of a group, to collaborate, to have fun and to create things together,” he says. “So I would focus on theater groups, I would focus on athletics, because the pandemic really made people physically very isolated and alienated from each other.”

It’s hard to imagine a world in which such activities might be prescribed and paid for by health insurers, or educational systems for that matter. There are no double-blind peer-reviewed studies to establish that they make people feel better. Van der Kolk is not at all put off by this. People surprise him all the time. □

War-torn ward

Rescuers and medics sift through the ruins of a wing at the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv on July 8, after the Russian military fired more than 40 missiles into several Ukrainian cities. The daytime airstrikes were Russia's heaviest assault on Ukraine in four months and killed at least 42 people, including five children; dozens more were injured. The hospital held 627 patients at the time of the attack, which, according to officials, interrupted procedures including cancer treatment and open-heart surgery.

Photograph by Roman Pilipey—

AFP/Getty Images

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The View

SOCIETY

HIP-HOP NEEDS A RECKONING

BY TAYLOR CRUMPTON

Misogynoir is, of course, not unique to hip-hop. Universal systems of oppression are prevalent in the lives of Black women. But what is unique about the hip-hop industry is that its leaders feel the need to defend the genre that made them—to protect it and gate-keep it, even at the cost of sweeping violence under the rug. This has interwoven gender-based oppression into its DNA. ▶

INSIDE

TOUGH TIMES FOR PRESIDENTIAL
INCUMBENTS AHEAD

COVID-19 SETTLES
INTO A PATTERN

IMMIGRATION IS ABOUT
MORE THAN A BORDER

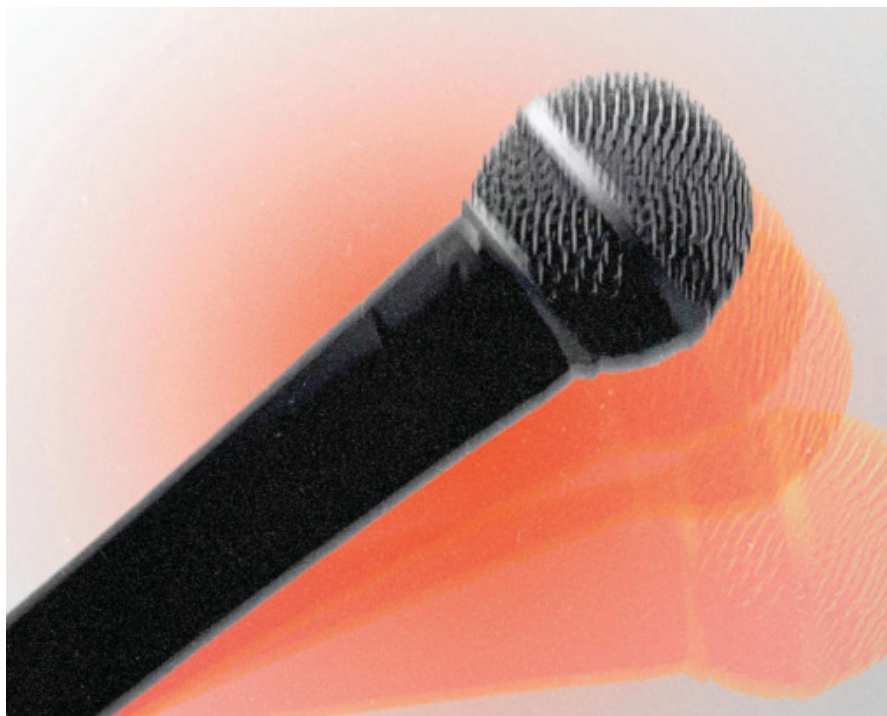
Cassie Ventura is not the first survivor of hip-hop's abuse, and unfortunately will not be the last. In the months since she filed a federal lawsuit against Sean "Diddy" Combs for rape and abuse in November 2023, seven women and one male survivor have come out against the mogul with stories of alleged abuse and harm. In a July essay for the *New York Times*, a former *Vibe* editor accused Combs of threatening her life over a 1997 magazine story.

Ventura's brutal account, coupled with recently released surveillance video of the singer being physically assaulted by Combs in 2016, has also reignited discussions about why hip-hop needs its own #MeToo movement. (Combs apologized for his actions on the video, but denied all other allegations. *People* later reported that Combs deleted all of his posts on Instagram, including his apology video to Ventura.)

Other people have since come forward about sexual and physical assault at the hands of other men in hip-hop. Musician and record producer The Dream, for instance, was accused of sexual and physical assault by Chanaaz Mangroe, his former protégé. (The Dream told the *New York Times*, "These claims are untrue and defamatory.") But the pushback Ventura received from hip-hop's elder statesmen—like Akon, Uncle Luke, Slim Thug, and Stevie J, to name a few who chose to stand by Combs and discredit her claims—proved why, while Hollywood and other industries have broken some ground since the Harvey Weinstein allegations in 2017, a reckoning of gender violence has yet to transpire in the genre. It seems a culture of fear is governing hip-hop. And it's about time we recognize it.

After the May 17 release of the surveillance video by CNN, Slim Thug and Uncle Luke rescinded their support for Combs. But the majority of prominent men in hip-hop have remained silent about the truth, and their silence has become complicity.

FROM ITS INCEPTION half a century ago, hip-hop has had to protect itself from law enforcement, the media,



and political leaders. Often those seen as its protectors were Black men. Hip-hop gave those men access to wealth and resources that they had never seen.

In turn, Black women, who also helped to create the music and safeguard the culture, were subjected to dehumanization and humiliation. That dangerous bargain has proved to be profitable for the men in charge. Some of the genre's earliest titans—like Russell Simmons, Dr. Dre, and L.A. Reid—were able to accumulate economic and social capital while reportedly assaulting women who worked around them.

"Why is it so hard to believe Black women?" ask Patrice Tillery and Christina M. Jones Esq. in an article for the Battered Women's Justice Project on intimate-partner violence. "Even in situations where sharing our truth benefits us in no visible way, and in many cases, makes something that is already incredibly challenging, exponentially harder. Why do we have to beg for the bare minimum?"

Despite the efforts of many top artists, from Ice Cube to Killer Mike, to critique white supremacy, capitalism, and mass incarceration, there is

a conspicuous silence when it comes to sexuality and gender. Instead, hip-hop and the people who support the industry have long used the harm and violence enacted on Black women as a way to promote their newest song. In the digital-media age, that harm and violence has turned into content.

And Black women aren't the only ones subjugated to harassment and mistreatment. When producer Rodney "Lil Rod" Jones filed a lawsuit against Combs for sexual harassment and sexual assault in February, the response on social media was an influx of homophobic content, with the "No Homo" slur replaced by "No Diddy." Some people used Jones' lawsuit to downplay the other lawsuits filed by women.

Because misogynoir is rooted in the devaluation of femininity at large, LGBTQIA+ people are also susceptible to gender-based violence. And in a genre where Black toxic masculinity is a key to success, hip-hop does not create space to celebrate Black queerness.

If hip-hop will survive another 50 years, it cannot continue like this.

Crumpton is a music, pop-culture, and politics writer from Dallas

THE RISK REPORT BY IAN BREMMER

A global movement against the status quo



WITH SO MANY elections in big countries this year, it's a good time to look at how the politics of democracies is shifting. But this is no simple turn to the left or the right. In France, Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally scored big gains in the first round of this year's legislative elections, but it was an alliance of leftist parties that surged in the second round. In Britain, the center-left Labour Party won a landslide victory over the center-right Conservatives. In Germany, the U.S., and Canada, it's the right that registers major gains in current polling.

If we look deeper than ideological labels—and beyond voters in Europe and the U.S.—an undeniable trend comes into focus: voters are fed up with incumbents. In India, the party of still popular Prime Minister Narendra Modi expected an easy win with a record number of parliamentary seats earlier this year. Instead, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party lost its parliamentary majority and must rely on partners in other parties to continue his reforms. In South Africa, the African National Congress lost its majority for the first time in the country's postapartheid history, falling from 57.9% of the vote in 2019 to a stunning 40.2% this year. To form a government, the humbled ANC has been forced to turn to the Democratic Alliance, its main opposition.

In short, the global democratic trend this year is a resounding

rejection of the status quo. French elections were less a victory for the left or right than a noisy repudiation of the center—namely, the increasingly unpopular President Emmanuel Macron. In the U.K., voters handed victory to Labour not because new PM Keir Starmer's party made a compelling case for a specific set of reforms, but because so many British voters rejected the Conservative Party after 14 years in

His Liberal Democratic Party will remain in power, but only after replacing Kishida.

THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS to the trend. Handpicked successors won elections this year in Taiwan and Mexico, but that may be because fear of China makes Taiwan the most special of special cases, and Mexico's Presidents are limited by law to a single term. (Claudia Sheinbaum does represent landmark change, however, because she will be Mexico's first female and first Jewish President.)

The political cultures and dynamics in these countries vary widely. American voters worry Biden is too old to continue the job. Kishida is blamed for a party fundraising scandal. French voters tell pollsters that Macron is arrogant and aloof. India is roiled by accusations that Modi has become too powerful. South Africa's ANC is riven by internal rivalries between President Cyril Ramaphosa and his predecessor Jacob Zuma.

But though every democracy is different, they share a common problem. The aftereffects of the pandemic have touched the lives and livelihoods of billions of people. Local economies continue to suffer as supply chains remain knotted, and inflation is stubbornly high. Government subsidies are drying up, and economic contractions, particularly in poor countries, feed migration, which fuels anger at governments in richer countries for failing to manage it.

It's tough times for incumbents no matter where they govern—and voters have still more anger to vent. □



Voters wait to cast their ballots on May 29 in Matatiele, South Africa

power under five Prime Ministers.

In the U.S., President Biden's campaign was in serious trouble well before his stumbling debate performance and the attempted assassination of Donald Trump. Canada's Liberal Party, led by third-term Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, trails the opposition Conservatives by 18 points. The approval rating for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has spiraled from 73% in March 2022 to just 28% in June. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida scored a July approval rating of 15.5%.



A nurse preps a COVID-19 shot



Health Matters

By Alice Park

SENIOR HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

IT'S SUMMER, AND FLU AND RSV HAVE come and gone. But as ever, COVID-19 is different. Even though the pandemic is behind us, the virus is once again surging in the U.S.

COVID-19 seems to be settling into a pattern of two peaks a year: one in the winter and one in the summer. Data from early July, the most recent available, showed rates of positive COVID-19 tests from labs (which represent only a small fraction of overall cases) continuing to increase. Hospitalizations for the disease also climbed in early summer, particularly among the elderly. Signs of the virus in wastewater—which provides among the most accurate real-time snapshots of COVID-19 prevalence—have been increasing since May.

The good news is that while the number of cases is climbing, deaths from COVID-19 continue to drop.

Experts point to a number of factors behind the uptick. First, people's immunity to the virus is waning; only 22% of people in the U.S. received the most updated vaccine, which became available in the fall. Second, the newest variants are mutating to

spread more easily between people, which means more people are likely to get infected.

Lower immunity could also be contributing to people experiencing symptoms like fever, coughing, and fatigue more strongly than they may have in past bouts with the disease, since “vaccines give you better immunity than getting the disease,” says Dr. Robert Murphy, professor of infectious diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The low uptake of the latest vaccine from last fall means fewer people have the strongest possible protection.

BUT SO FAR, the virus does not seem to be causing more severe disease overall. “The latest data on COVID-19 show that it is now starting to settle in and have similar kinds of statistics to

‘The goal of the vaccine is to keep you out of the hospital.’

—DR. PAUL OFFIT, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA

influenza, meaning hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths every year,” says Dr. Paul Offit, director of the vaccine-education center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a member of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's vaccine expert committee. And similar to flu, the people most severely affected are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

Offit says vaccines are critical for these people, who are at high risk of developing complications from COVID-19, and staying up to date can protect them from being hospitalized. But it's important to set realistic expectations. “The goal of the vaccine is to keep you out of the hospital, to keep you out of the intensive-care unit, and to keep you out of the morgue,” he says. “Not to protect you against mild disease.”

The CDC's expert vaccine committee recently recommended an updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and up for the coming fall and winter season. The shot will be revised to target the KP variant currently circulating, which should improve its ability to minimize symptoms.

On top of getting vaccinated, it might be time for some people to consider masking again—since a more transmissible virus is circulating, and more people are traveling and gathering in crowded public settings like airports. “If I were in a high-risk group and I'm in a large group of people I didn't know—like on an airplane—I think it's reasonable to wear a mask,” says Murphy. That consideration should also apply to people who are sick. “I think anyone who has a respiratory illness should stay at home,” says Offit. “And if you can't stay at home, you should wear a mask. If you're in a high-risk group, get tested—and if you have COVID-19, take an antiviral.”



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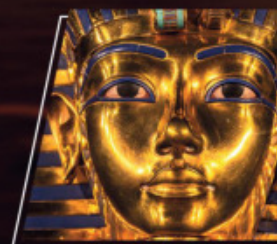
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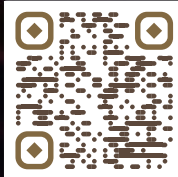
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IMMIGRATION

The border is not the problem

BY DINAW MENGESTU

WHEN MY FATHER ARRIVED IN AMERICA FROM ETHIOPIA in 1978, he was resettled, with the help of an immigration agency, to Peoria, Ill. He found a job working on the factory floor of a Caterpillar Inc. plant, and by the time my mother, sister, and I joined him two years later, he'd already found a two-bedroom apartment two blocks from the Catholic school my sister and I would attend.

It was a startlingly American childhood, made more so by the fact that we spent our weekends at a Southern Baptist church on the other side of town. My parents, raised in the Ethiopian Orthodox church, had never heard of Southern Baptists before coming to America. But every Sunday, there we were, in the front pews, the first and only Black family to have ever attended the church.

On a recent cross-country road trip, my wife and I decided to take our two children on a detour to Peoria. My family had left the city at the tail end of the 1980s recession, when unemployment hovered near 20%. I wanted to see if we could find Sharon, one of the members of the church my family had been especially close to. I hadn't spoken to Sharon in at least 10 years. We arrived unannounced at her doorstep just in time to take her to lunch. It was the first and most likely the last time she would meet my family. On the drive to the restaurant, Sharon pointed out the Greek Orthodox church near her home.

"Your mom and dad tried to go there," she said, "but the priest or pastor told them not to come back. He said they would be more comfortable somewhere else."

I was about to ask Sharon how they were able to do so at a Southern Baptist church, but she saw the question coming.

"Your mom and dad met with Brother Gene, and he saw that they were good people and told them they would be welcome in his church," she explained. "Before you all came, though, he went around and called every single person. He said if anyone gave your family a hard time, they'd have hell to pay for it. And that was it. I don't think anyone bothered you at all."

It felt like a confession when Sharon told the story, and I suppose to some degree it was. If no one at the church ever told us to our face that we didn't belong—if no one ever explicitly asked us to leave—it was because the good people of the church had been compelled, even threatened, into accepting us. Had they not been, it's unlikely we would have ever lasted more than a week at the church.

Given the current apocalyptic narrative surrounding immigration, it's hard to imagine the leader of a conservative Southern Baptist church making a similar kind of phone call today. Whether or not Brother Gene knew my parents to be good people, he knew they were refugees, and in the



^
A new U.S. citizen, leaving a 2018 mass naturalization ceremony in L.A., waves the flag

early 1980s, the political and cultural framework had yet to solidify into the often dehumanizing imagery that's common today.

AS A WRITER WHOSE WORK is rooted in stories of asylum, I've sat in on numerous discussions in which immigration experts debated the best alternate stories to cast immigration in a more positive, humane light: immigration as an economic necessity, immigration as a moral and ethical obligation, immigration as part of our cultural heritage. The idea that the story can be changed, however, sits on a precarious premise, one that reinforces the idea that the dominant narrative being told is actually about migration, or the border, when in fact, that's never been the case.

A year before Brother Gene called the members of his congregation and told them to welcome us, another Southern Baptist, President Jimmy Carter, signed the Refugee Act of 1980. That transformative piece of legislation defined a refugee as any person unable or unwilling to return home because of persecution



The narrative persists, indifferent to facts

or well-founded fear of persecution—the same terms as the ones adopted by the U.N. in 1951. More important, the act established an annual refugee-admission limit free of race-based geographic quotas and created the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which helped families like mine establish new lives in places like Peoria, Ill.

That the Refugee Act of 1980 passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in an era of double-digit inflation and negative economic growth says something critical about how we frame and imagine the competing narratives surrounding immigration. Despite the economic challenges, the relatively open-armed embrace of immigrants that defined that act was part of a larger story the country needed to tell in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. In that story, the global refugee crisis that followed the end of the war became an opportunity for the U.S. to recast itself as a land of hope and opportunity, particularly for those fleeing the tyranny of political repression.

The current narrative framework when it comes to immigration couldn't be more different. Today, the voices of

authority on the other end of the line insist at every opportunity that the refugees at our border and in our communities represent nothing less than an existential threat to the country. They are criminals, terrorists, and drug dealers, many from hostile or “sh-thole” countries, armed with fraudulent claims of persecution.

It's a damning and obviously racist narrative, at odds with both the current and historical facts of migration. The number of migrant encounters (which includes apprehensions and expulsions) at the southern border in 1986 was roughly the same as in 2023 when adjusted for population growth in the U.S., while the total number of global refugees admitted into the country fell from a high of 207,116 in 1980 to just over 25,000 in 2022. The numbers on their own, however, mean little, even when paired with numerous other statistics that prove that immigration is a net gain to the economy and that immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than people born in the country. The narrative persists, indifferent to facts, because it allows us to point to something other than ourselves.

It's no coincidence that today's border narrative mirrors some of our country's most intractable issues. Addiction, and the incalculable toll it has taken on our country's most vulnerable communities, is a “border crisis” rather than the product of a broken health care system. Decades of political dysfunction and neglect have created a system of horribly underfunded agencies at both the state and federal levels, and so our asylum process is overwhelmed because of the devious immigrants sneaking into the country—not because U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which processes asylum applications for refugees currently in the U.S., is a fee-funded agency within Homeland Security, financially unable to process the more than 10 million pending asylum cases in its backlog.

When the Office of Refugee Resettlement was created under the Department of Health and Human Services in 1980, more than 90% of its \$416 million budget was allocated to help state agencies cover the medical and educational expenses of their refugee populations. That amount is more than triple what Congress allocated to the agency two decades later, making it that much easier for Americans to imagine that a wall would fix what we broke.

While it may be hard to change the current narrative, it doesn't mean we shouldn't imagine what those other stories might look like. They would have nothing to do with better, or fewer, or less economically vulnerable individuals and families attempting to enter the country. Those stories would instead consider what our borders might look like if we saw them as an integral part of our country rather than the end, and they would imagine what our immigration system might look like if we devoted the resources necessary to creating a just asylum process rather than the ineffective militarized frontier that currently exists.

Tell those stories enough, and we might see that both the problem and the solution is us.

Mengestu is an Ethiopian American novelist. His latest book is Someone Like Us

THE JULY 18
SPEECH FROM
REPUBLICAN
PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINEE
DONALD TRUMP
IS BROADCAST
AT THE PARTY'S
CONVENTION



Trump Ascendant

IT'S NOW THE FORMER
PRESIDENT'S RACE TO LOSE

BY ERIC CORTELLESA/BUTLER, PA.
AND BRIAN BENNETT/MILWAUKEE



AN HOUR AFTER DONALD TRUMP WAS SHOT AT

a Pennsylvania rally, he called his son Eric from his room at Butler Memorial Hospital and asked him to conference in other family members. When they all got on the phone, Trump was lighthearted about his brush with death, and the mood shifted from collective shock to hopeful levity. Eric and Don Jr. joked that their father, now missing a chunk of his ear thanks to one of the would-be assassin's bullets, would have something in common with Evander Holyfield, the heavyweight boxing champion who lost part of his when Mike Tyson bit it off. "You always wanna be like the great ones," the elder Trump quipped. Then he got down to business. He would fly back to his home in Bedminster, N.J., that night, but he wouldn't be there for long. "We're not changing anything about Milwaukee," Trump told them. "We're going to the convention. Not a single thing changes."

In fact, much had. The shooting on July 13 capped an extraordinary run of luck for the former President. Despite multiple lost elections for the GOP under his leadership, two impeachments, and the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, attack by his supporters on the U.S. Capitol, the Republican Party had fallen into total obeisance behind him. Beset by an unprecedented 88 state and federal criminal charges, Trump had watched as one case seized up after a prosecutor's indiscretion, another was dismissed by a conservative judge, and a third was postponed. The convictions on 34 felony counts that he received in a fourth ended up boosting his poll numbers rather than tanking them. The hot streak gained pace in late June and early July as the Supreme Court first weakened the prosecutions of the Jan. 6 rioters, and then granted Trump and all other Presidents immunity from some crimes. Trump's opponent, President Joe Biden, imploded in their debate, prompting an ultimately successful Democratic effort to push Biden out of the race. His feeble performance put new states into play at the top of the ticket and increased the chances of total Republican control of government in 2025.

For all that, Trump's luck on July 13 was of another order, the kind of confluence of events and political circumstance that can change the world. A slight turn of Trump's head as the sniper pulled the trigger meant the bullet cut his ear instead of killing him. "Holy sh-t, I got lucky," Trump told his family. "If I turned my head one more second later, it would have gone straight through my head." After he ducked to the ground, he emerged

amid a wall of Secret Service agents, blood on his cheek, pumping his fist and exhorting the cheering crowd, "Fight!" It was among the most powerful scenes in recent American history, and it resonated with the central messages of Trump's campaign: victimhood, strength, defiance.

Riding that breathtaking moment, Trump arrived in Milwaukee holding history in his hands, in a stronger political position than he had ever been in. The question was what he would do with it. For the first time, he may be able to break beyond his hardcore base of supporters and build a political coalition that could not only carry him into a second term but also give him a broad mandate to govern. As the curtain went up in Milwaukee, there were signs he might actually do it. Trump handed speaking roles to former rivals, invited a union leader to deliver a prime-time address, and embraced onetime enemies in the tech world who were calling in with well-wishes. "Everyone's reaching out to him," says one person close to Trump. "He's letting them back in, which is not his nature, which is usually full of revenge."

Being Trump, that remains the other possibility. Despite his recent show of discipline, he contains the same vindictive streak that has often led him to scupper his own successes with self-destructive and petty behavior. People close to him call it "the bad Donald Trump." Trump's combative instincts are often the enemy of his interests. The burst of momentum he enjoys now could be the prelude to hubristic overreach. "It's very critical for Trump, in the wake of this, not to revert to that side of himself," says GOP Representative Wesley Hunt of Texas, who sat with Trump at the convention.

The near future of the nation may depend on how Trump seizes the moment. For his opponents, who have argued that Trump is a power-hungry potential dictator, the attempted assassination and Trump's gathering strength sent an already desperate effort to stop him into an accelerating panic. They saw a brand of strongman populism that could long outlast Trump in his choice for his running mate, Ohio Senator J.D. Vance, who has said he would have followed through on the scheme to reinstall Trump as President after he lost the 2020 election. For Trump's supporters, the possibility of an unbridled leader with maximum power was a thrilling vision coming into view.

ONLY FIVE MINUTES into his speech in Butler on Saturday, Trump called an audible. Abandoning



THE CHEERING CROWD IN MILWAUKEE ON DAY TWO OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

the teleprompter, he asked technicians to post on two giant screens his favorite chart, which tracks border crossings over the past 12 years. It wasn't new to the "front-row Joes" and MAGA faithful familiar with Trump's routine. But it usually comes later on during Trump's rallies. This time, on a spontaneous whim, he moved it up to the beginning. It was, he recalled to family after he landed in Bedminster that evening, the reason he turned his head just as the shooter pulled the trigger on his AR-15 and sent the bullet toward him.

Family who spoke to him after the near-death experience said Trump was upbeat and grateful to be alive. Former critics called to show goodwill. So did President Biden. The outreach has apparently had a positive effect on Trump. "What's happening now is more and more people are treating him with respect," says the person close to Trump. "What you're seeing is, instead of people treating him bad and then getting the bad Donald Trump, people are treating him nice and we're getting the nice Donald."

How long that lasts, given Trump's record, is an open question. Aides say Trump is focused on one thing only—winning—and his current mood had been building before the Pennsylvania rally, as Biden sputtered through a miserable postdebate stretch that saw his polls sag and Democrats openly

question whether he should remain the party's standard bearer. In planning his coronation in Milwaukee, Trump had already demonstrated an unusual willingness to heed his campaign advisers' admonitions to build as broad a tent as possible.

Trump had signed off on inviting former primary rivals Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley to give speeches at the convention. He'd also helped choreograph a speech by Teamsters president Sean O'Brien, a striking prolabor play that would have been unthinkable in past GOP conventions. "Trump has his hand in everything," says his daughter-in-law and handpicked RNC co-chair Lara Trump. "Some of our big, exciting speakers, he's been very involved in talks about that."

Trump's rewrite of the official GOP policy document, making it shorter and less detailed, revealed his efforts to extend the party's appeal as well as his own. The week before the shooting, according to three sources, Trump spent hours with his top campaign brass in Bedminster to craft the RNC's 2024 platform, a list of 20 priorities for a second term. Among the long-standing GOP planks removed: the party no longer says life begins at conception or expresses any opposition to same-sex marriage. Trump's heavy involvement also stemmed from his frustration over media

speculation that outside groups like the Heritage Foundation—which, along with over 100 conservative organizations, crafted a 900-page policy prescription called Project 2025—were preparing to be the policy puppet masters of a future Trump Administration. “People point to this Project 2025 and all this other nonsense,” the official tells TIME. “The American people can look at the Trump-RNC platform. That is the agenda for the next term.”

The biggest decision still in front of Trump after the shooting was his running mate. To many, the vice-presidential selection represented a proxy war on the right. On one side, many Republicans pushed for a conventional pick: perhaps Florida Senator Marco Rubio, a Reaganite neoconservative who might aid the party’s push for Hispanic voters, or North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, a wealthy former entrepreneur and a favorite of the Chamber of Commerce crowd. On the other were MAGA true believers, who wanted Trump to choose an avatar of America First populist nationalism. Trump fielded calls on the Monday morning after the shooting from Republican mainstays, including Rupert Murdoch and Kellyanne Conway, pushing Burgum or Rubio. Several of Trump’s confidants rushed to convince him otherwise; Don Jr., the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, and the right-wing provocateur Charlie Kirk were all pushing Vance.

Trump was already leaning toward Vance, then 39, his advisers say. He was impressed with the Senator’s trajectory: growing up poor in Ohio, joining the military, graduating from Yale Law School, serving a stint in Silicon Valley, becoming a U.S. Senator. Trump had gotten over Vance’s initial harsh criticisms of him in 2016—Vance once called him “America’s Hitler”—and the two had forged a relationship over the past two years. Trump also liked Vance’s vigorous defense of him during hostile interviews on network television. The clincher, those close to Trump say, came after the Butler shooting, when Trump began to think of Vance’s youth as an asset. “One of the discussions after the assassination attempt was a real reflection on the future,” says a source close to Trump, and “the idea that one day, the movement will go on.”

The choice is also a play to win over voters in the so-called Blue Wall states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, which are all but must-wins for Biden. Because of Vance’s roots and story of self-invention, the thinking goes, working-class voters and some Democrats may respond to a youthful Senator who is skilled at articulating the ideological pillars of Trumpism: an aversion to foreign entanglements and American adventurism overseas; a deep skepticism of free-trade agreements; and a hostility to immigration. “He’s somebody who will be very, very, very effective in the Rust



RNC SCREENS SHOW TRUMP AND VANCE, LEFT; AN ATTENDEE CONSIDERS A “NEVER SURRENDER” TRUMP T-SHIRT

Belt,” says senior campaign official Brian Hughes.

Trump’s final move ahead of the convention was rewriting his speech to tone down his attacks on Biden and craft a message that could expand his realm of support. “It’d be awfully easy for him to take a middle road, or even low road and not be nice,” says Eric Trump. By all accounts, the speech Trump had prepared before the shooting was not. Says the younger Trump of the rewritten version, “the tone is different, the cadence is different.”

IF THE QUESTION hanging over America after the assassination attempt was which Trump would emerge, the answer, judging from the speech he ended up delivering, seemed to be both. He started with some 15 minutes recounting his near miss days earlier, speaking in an uncharacteristically quiet, almost reflective tone. But soon enough he reverted to his defensive, angry default, attacking Biden and “crazy Nancy Pelosi,” pushing the falsehood that the 2020 election was stolen, and describing gruesome killings allegedly committed by undocumented immigrants. Some of the red-meat riffing was Trump going off script, but plenty of



it had been written into the speech as well. The former President seemed to feel the stakes, even as the rambling speech ticked toward a record 90 minutes. “I better finish strong,” he said. “Otherwise we’ll blow it and I can’t let it happen.”

Trump’s ability to win new voters remains in question, but he is coming out of the convention with momentum. For months, some polls have suggested that he was eating away at some of the pillars of Biden’s political coalition, including young voters and Black and Hispanic voters, especially men. Now his team began to detect a softening in the social stigma that had long kept Trump from gathering support in certain circles. “In the 2016 campaign, it started becoming socially very hard for people to say publicly they were for Trump,” says the source close to Trump, who speaks with him frequently. “Privately, in places like Hollywood and Silicon Valley and New York,” the person says, “people are reaching out and trying to restart the relationship with him because they see an inevitability of his winning.”

The campaign believes that the boost Trump got from his reaction to the shooting and Biden’s

struggles has opened up the electoral map. Advisers think all seven battleground states—Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, Nevada, and North Carolina—are theirs for the taking. Meanwhile, the list of states the campaign hopes to flip red has expanded to include Virginia—which Biden won by 10 points in 2020—as well as Minnesota, Maine, New Mexico, and New Hampshire. “We’re in a position to be expanding the map,” says a top campaign lieutenant.

The former President can now run up the score, agrees Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia and a vocal Trump critic. “It’s almost impossible for me to imagine Trump getting a majority of the popular vote, though given all the factors, it’s a lot more possible than it ever has been. But the Electoral College right now, and maybe for the foreseeable future, isn’t going to be particularly close,” Sabato says. Trump is likely to get “way over 300 electoral votes,” he says. “Which swing state isn’t going for Trump now? I can’t think of one.”

Biden’s announcement July 21 that he was bowing out of the race, and his endorsement of Vice President Kamala Harris, was a stark acknowledgement of just how strong a position Trump is in. What effect the change will have on the race is an open question. Trump’s team has been compiling opposition research on the Vice President and other potential Democratic successors to Biden, according to a senior Trump campaign adviser. Within minutes of Biden’s announcement, Trump allies were already running ads against Harris. A still uncertain process for picking Trump’s new opponent presented its own perils.

If it’s now Trump’s race to lose, he’s still perfectly capable of doing so. Polling shows that a significant section of America is dug in on their dislike for Trump. An AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research analysis found that 6 in 10 Americans have a very or somewhat unfavorable opinion of him, a proportion that has remained steady since 2021. Fresh examples of his disregard for the law, recklessness on the foreign stage, or elevation of personal interests above all else could rapidly undermine any progress he is making with those voters willing to give him a second look. Despite Trump’s highs and Biden’s lows, most surveys show it still to be a close race.

How long will the beneficent, big-tent-building Trump last? The person close to Trump says he’s in a good place: “A happy Trump is a winning Trump.” But his family says he is unlikely to abandon his pugilistic impulses. Says Eric Trump: “It’s very hard to take the right hook out of the boxer.”

—With reporting by LESLIE DICKSTEIN, SIMMONNE SHAH, and JULIA ZORTHIAN □

ESSAY

Unity is still possible in America, even now

BY NANCY GIBBS

A COUNTRY BORN BY BREAKING WITH A KING inherits dissent as a birthright. Generation after generation faces its test of conflict management: crafting the Constitution itself, with all its convictions and compromises; balancing local vs. federal power centers; a Civil War exposing fissures in democracy's bedrock; and on and on, battles over rights and responsibilities, suffrage, prohibition, isolation vs. intervention, and then the serial upheavals over justice for multiple marginalized groups—Black, female, gay, trans. Each era is tasked with not only choosing its fights but also deciding how to fight them.

Our current crisis of division, once again manifest as violence, feels shocking but not sudden; the dread has been deepening for years, a defining quality of this century that began with an election that ended in a tie. As our information streams fill with acid, it eats at grace and trust. Americans have always disagreed, exercised muscles of reason and passion to press for progress and a vision for the common good that we don't necessarily hold in common. Do we care more about freedom or equality? Privacy or security? Being a leader in the world or tucked in safely at home with oceans to buffer us? Figuring that out was the heart of the democratic challenge, but the information technologies allegedly designed to connect the world conspire to dismantle the values that process depends on.

The tragedy, but maybe also the opportunity, of *this* moment is that relative to past brawls, Americans are largely united on key issues—even if you would never know it from the temperature of the debate. “Red states” from Arkansas to Missouri to Florida pass minimum-wage referendums by fat majorities; Kansas votes to protect access to abortion. Two-thirds of Democrats agree that the situation at the border is a problem; more than 60% of people think it's too easy to get a gun; and about 80% worry about the solvency of Social Security and Medicare.

And in one last flicker of unity, 4 out of 5 people told Georgetown University pollsters that they fear that democracy is under threat. This was echoed in an Ipsos poll of 2024 voters that found that while economy, immigration, crime, and climate ranked high on the list of concerns, “political extremism or threats to democracy” topped them.

But this is where shared purpose runs into the shredder of profit and power. People disagree



profoundly about the source of the threat to democracy, with voters on the left and right viewing each other as uniquely, historically dangerous—immoral, dishonest, and closed-minded. In that dark vision, gaining and holding onto power, and denying it to the opposition, is more important than any single issue.

And now comes the assassination attempt on Donald Trump, instantly cast by his most bare-knuckled allies as the culmination of the Democrats' campaign to stop him at all costs. Ignorance about the shooter or his motive did not deter reckless speculation; it inflamed it. “Well of course they tried to keep him off the ballot, they tried to put him in jail, and now you see this...,” campaign manager Chris LaCivita tweeted and then deleted. “The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs,” wrote Trump's vice-presidential nominee J.D. Vance. “That rhetoric led directly to President Trump's attempted assassination.” Naturally Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene went further: “The Democrat party is flat out evil, and yesterday they tried to murder President Trump.”

You can call this working the refs, trying to preemptively silence criticism, hypocrisy from the



< **SUPPORTERS GATHER BEFORE TRUMP'S SPEECH AT A RALLY IN BUTLER, PA., ON JULY 13**

interpret events in a shared social exercise—and a way that partisan players can twist an event to suit their agendas. The target himself seized the moment: “Fear Not. I Am Donald Trump And I Will Make America Great Again,” read the fundraising appeal.

But here too is a possible path to safer, higher ground. Our discourse amplifies the most radical voices and alienates the rest. Actual news avoidance is at all-time highs, not just in the U.S. but also in other deeply polarized countries, as people want nothing to do with the vitriol that they associate with political engagement. According to Pew, 70% of adult social media users say they rarely or never post about political or social issues. So we are left looking in a fun-house mirror, as misunderstanding about actual beliefs drives us further apart. The nonprofit group Starts With Us found that 9 in 10 Americans agree on core principles—a government accountable to the people, respect and compassion across difference, the rule of law applied fairly to all people—but only around 1 in 3 Democrats and Republicans thinks the other side cares about these values.

Social media companies must be accountable for the harms they create, the addictions they feed, and the lies they promote as they dismantle their trust and safety teams just when they are needed most. This is not a call for censorship; no amount of content moderation can police the posts of a billion users in real time. But like other forms of media, they should be responsible for the content they intentionally choose to amplify and monetize.

And we are each free agents of understanding. We can seek out reliable information sources, ones that try to get at the truth and hold themselves accountable if they fail—or we can choose to soak in the comfort of confirmation. Even as overall trust in the media reaches all-time lows, people tend to trust their own news sources. So I urge my students to be intentional about their media diets; omnivorous curiosity is a civic duty. Watch the networks you normally avoid, read writers you disagree with, seek out the perspectives you instinctively reject. The goal is not to change your mind; it is to widen the lens. “Understanding is a two-way street,” Eleanor Roosevelt observed, and when we don’t see and hear the truth of our fellow citizens, we stand little chance of appreciating all that we actually hold in common, even now.

Gibbs, a former editor-in-chief of TIME, is director of the Shorenstein Center and the Edward R. Murrow Professor of the Practice of Press, Politics, and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School

partisans who menace their rivals while mocking violence aimed at them. But because X is a reliably squalid place, some Democrats dived into the “Blue-Anon” fever swamps as well: “The last thing America needed was sympathy for the devil but here we are,” Colorado state representative Steven Woodrow tweeted, then deleted. Even as calls came in from across the spectrum for calm, prayers, perspective, peace, the furies channeled by the platforms’ amoral algorithms ensured that poisonous rumors would find a million minds to infect. It was all #staged; the Secret Service was complicit; it was a false-flag operation, just the latest effort of shadowy forces to ensure Trump’s re-election by any means necessary.

ACCORDING TO THE Pew Research Center, 8 in 10 Americans think people get different facts depending on where they get their news. This all but guarantees that crises and conspiracies travel in packs. We watched the shooting but didn’t know what we were seeing, so in the face of novel facts we relied on familiar frames. People who already distrust the media, or the deep state, or law enforcement, were primed to see in the drama of Butler, Pa., a confirmation of their deepest suspicions. The act of “collective sense-making,” as University of Washington professor Kate Starbird explains, is how people

SPECIAL
REPORT

D A R K N E S S R I S I N G

An attack on former President Trump punctuates the alarming surge of political violence

By Vera
Bergengruen

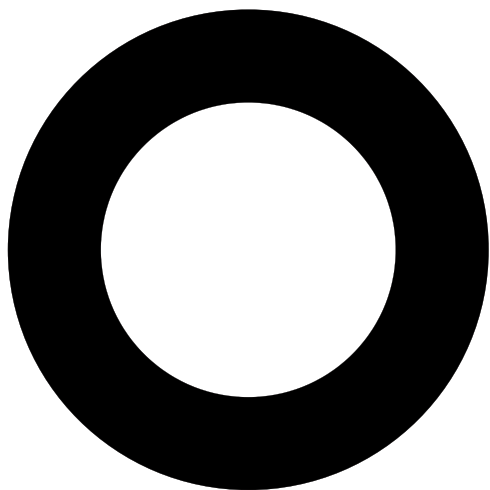




We the People

ILLUSTRATION
BY MARK HARRIS
FOR TIME

**SECRET SERVICE
SURROUNDS
TRUMP AFTER
SHOTS WERE FIRED
AT THE BUTLER, PA.,
RALLY ON JULY 13**



ONE NIGHT IN JANUARY, 15 PEOPLE TRUDGED INTO AN ARTS CENTER in Nazareth, Pa., for a political focus group. Democrats and Republicans, grandmothers and high school teachers, they gathered in a room still decorated with Christmas lights to discuss their concerns about the democratic process with a group called Keep Our Republic, a non-partisan civic organization that focuses on threats to the election system. Ari Mittleman, the organization's executive director, has observed similar events across the battleground states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, so he expected the participants in Nazareth to express negative views about the 2024 elections, the candidates, and even the voting process itself. What Mittleman was not prepared for was a dark prediction that the panelists shared.

"The one thing that unified Democrats and Republicans," says Mittleman, was the strong sense that "this election will see political violence." In a recording of the Nazareth session shared with TIME, many participants said they believed it was a matter of when, not if, someone would be seriously injured or killed during the 2024 election cycle. "It was beyond unsettling," Mittleman recalls. "Almost to a person, they were saying that political violence was going to happen."

When it did happen on July 13 in Butler, Pa., the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump shocked the nation. But to many, it did not come as a surprise. The harrowing scene was surreal yet predictable, and not only because the U.S. has an ugly history of attacks against Presidents and presidential candidates. The gunshots fired by a skinny 20-year-old perched on a roof overlooking the Butler Farm Show grounds were a reminder of America's political reality in 2024, which has been warped by increasingly violent rhetoric, threats, and attacks.

For years, polls have traced a sharp rise in the share of Americans who believe violence is a valid means to achieve their political goals. In a December 2021 survey by the Washington Post and the University of Maryland, 1 in 3 respondents said they thought violent action against the government can be justified, compared with fewer than 1 in 10 in



the 1990s. In an April PBS/Marist poll, 28% of Republicans and 12% of Democrats said they believe Americans may "have to resort to violence to get the country back on track." In June, 10% of respondents surveyed by the University of Chicago's Project on Security and Threats said that the "use of force is justified to prevent Donald Trump from becoming President."

This trend has coincided with a documented surge in violent threats, harassment, and physical attacks targeting elected and civic officials, from prominent legislators and governors to small-town election clerks and school-board members. The wave of invective and intimidation has hollowed out local institutions, disrupted systems of law and government, drummed dedicated public servants out of office, and deterred others from running, especially women and people of color.

To many Americans, the prospect of political violence has become immediate and visible. More people are bringing guns to demonstrations. Every politically charged event, from Supreme Court decisions to Trump's trials to congressional hearings, elicits menacing warnings and talk of "civil war." The last presidential election ended in a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol by an angry mob that left five people dead and 140 injured. The vibes feel even darker this time, with the same two candidates describing one another as an existential threat to the nation.

Experts in political extremism expected these combustible factors to finally ignite with a



high-profile attack. “It’s the manifestation of the political environment we’re in,” says Daryl Johnson, a former senior intelligence analyst who tracked domestic extremism at the Department of Homeland Security. “And there’s gonna be more.”

THOMAS MATTHEW CROOKS, the suspect identified as the assailant who shot at Trump, remained a puzzle to investigators in the days after the shooting. Unlike most 20-year-olds, he seems to have had no public digital presence. He had no previous criminal record or documented history of mental illness, and used no threatening language on his private social media accounts, according to FBI investigators. He was a registered Republican, according to Pennsylvania voter data, but Federal Election Commission records show he made a \$15 donation to a progressive political action committee in 2021. It is not even clear that his purpose in firing shots at Trump’s rally—which, in addition to wounding the former President, killed a rallygoer and seriously wounded two others—was primarily political.

Crooks was living with his parents, who are both licensed professional counselors, in a middle-class Pittsburgh suburb. Two years out of high school, he worked in the kitchen of a local nursing home. He used an AR-style semi-automatic rifle legally purchased by his father, according to local law enforcement. Investigators also found “rudimentary” explosive devices and bombmaking material inside his car and home.

BY THE NUMBERS

34%

Percentage of Americans who say taking violent action against the government can be justified

8,008

Number of threats to members of Congress reported to the U.S. Capitol Police in 2024

20%

Percentage of adults who believe Americans may have to resort to violence to get the country back on track

457

Number of serious threats against federal judges in 2023, according to the U.S. Marshals Service

40%

Percentage of state legislators who report being threatened or attacked during the past three years

SOURCES: WASHINGTON POST/UMD; U.S. CAPITOL POLICE; PBS/MARIST POLL; U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE; BRENNAN CENTER

If the mystery surrounding Crooks’ motive is unusual, his normal background is not. Most perpetrators of political violence are not people with a history of criminality. They are seemingly ordinary Americans, off the radar of the authorities, for whom the idea of taking violent action privately crystallizes. “They seem to just come out of the blue,” says Johnson, the former Homeland Security analyst.

What is clear, experts say, is that the political environment plays a role. Crooks grew up in a nation where high-profile attacks against elected officials have become increasingly common. He was 7 when Democratic Representative Gabby Giffords was shot while meeting with constituents in a supermarket parking lot in Tucson, Ariz., in 2011. He was 13 when Representative Steve Scalise was shot by a left-wing extremist during a GOP congressional baseball team practice in Virginia in 2017. When Crooks was 17, federal authorities foiled a plot to kidnap Michigan’s Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer that was hatched by a right-wing militia group that posted violent antigovernment screeds. Crooks was a junior in high school when the country was rocked by the attack on the U.S. Capitol. As he graduated, the news was dominated by a disrupted plot to assassinate conservative Supreme Court Justices and an attack on former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s husband, whose skull was fractured by a conspiracy theorist wielding a hammer and zip ties and planning to kidnap the Democratic legislator.

“Since they were young adolescents, there has been a skyrocketing of political threats and political violence,” says Rachel Kleinfeld, an analyst who focuses on polarization and violence at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “That coarsening of political life, the normalization of incendiary and violent rhetoric, the sense that violence is a legitimate way to solve political problems,” she says, adding that this is “the background noise to this generation’s political rise.”

Threats against members of Congress are up nearly tenfold since 2015, with more than 8,000 reported last year, according to the U.S. Capitol Police. Serious threats against federal judges that trigger an investigation rose from 179 in 2019 to 457 in 2023. In a survey conducted earlier this year, more than 40% of state legislators reported being threatened or attacked during the past three years; nearly 90% said they had suffered other forms of abuse, including harassment, intimidation, and stalking. “It’s not registering for Americans that the general tenor of political life has become one in which you can expect to be threatened,” says Kleinfeld. Now, she says, “that is the cost of running for office.”

In the past, experts say, ideology tended to be

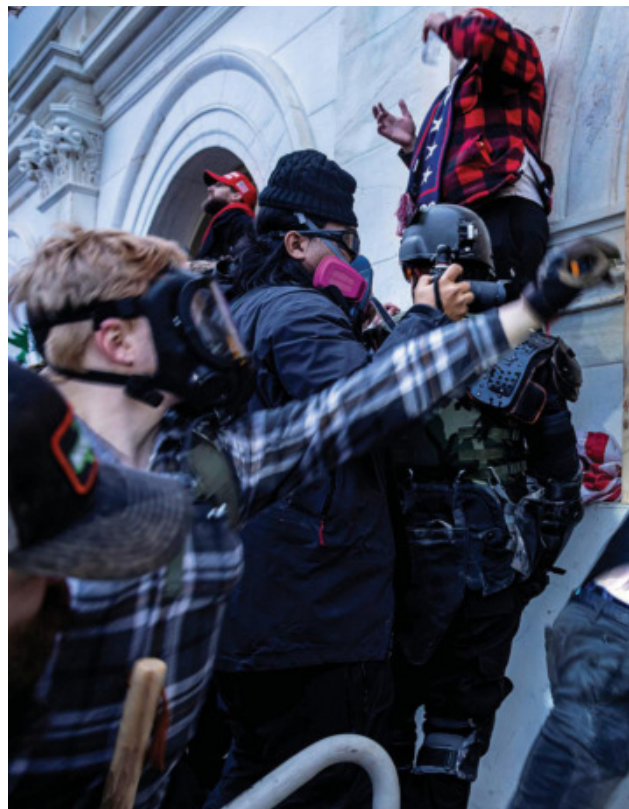
the main motivator for violent political attackers, from ecoterrorists to antiabortion extremists. The recent surge has been more partisan, tied to Americans' strong identification as Democrats or Republicans. Social media platforms and diffuse online communications have radicalized more people and made it easier for them to threaten political opponents or to target members of their own parties they see as traitors.

Language plays a role too. Trump pledged to "root out the communists, Marxists, fascists, and the radical-left thugs that live like vermin" and warned that "if I don't get elected, it's going to be a bloodbath for the whole country." During his presidential campaign, Joe Biden has condemned Trump's "assault on democracy," telling supporters that their "freedom is on the ballot."

"The state of American politics is so miserable, so ugly, that it's almost unrecognizable," says former Pennsylvania Republican Representative Charlie Dent, who is involved in the Keep Our Republic organization and was alarmed by the Nazareth focus group's anticipation of political violence. "One side says the elections are rigged, and we won't have a country if we don't win," Dent says. "The other side says democracy will cease to exist and the country will lapse into a fascist authoritarian society like *The Handmaid's Tale*. Both see the other as evil and illegitimate." Adds Dent: "At this rate, the country could experience civil disorder after the election regardless of the outcome."

THE FOOTAGE OF THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT on Trump, against the backdrop of violent threats at every level of government, could radicalize even more Americans, security analysts fear. Each prominent act of political violence adds to a cycle of "continued violent mobilization and countermobilization" by far-right and far-left individuals and groups, who may use these events to radicalize and recruit more followers, according to a new report by Washington-based New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy. "Neither likely outcome of the 2024 U.S. presidential election is expected to stem the heightened activity of domestic extremists, including those willing to use violence, for the next four years or more," analysts conclude in the July 10 report.

In their most recent threat assessment, DHS officials flagged domestic extremists motivated by partisan grievances or antigovernment conspiracies as a top national-security risk. Individuals or organized groups could target candidates, government officials, voters, and campaign events as well as election infrastructure such as polling places or ballot drops, analysts say. In contrast with much of the past two decades, when U.S. officials focused on larger terrorist groups, the highest threat now comes from self-radicalized Americans and "lone offenders," DHS concluded.



Taking office after the Jan. 6 attack, the Biden Administration vowed to fight the "rising tide" of domestic extremism. The U.S. government shifted resources from foreign terrorism to understanding homegrown radicalization and released a national strategy to address the problem. The plan included improved information sharing among law-enforcement agencies, investigating and understanding extremist ideologies, and preventing recruitment by these groups. The FBI distributed 40,000 booklets to partners on how to spot the signs of violent extremism.

While the Administration succeeded in dismantling some organized groups and militias, self-radicalized "lone wolf" actors continue to be the major driver of political violence. They are able to engage "in lethal attacks and acts of violence against targets of opportunity, using rudimentary

CAPITOL: BRENT STIRTON—GETTY IMAGES; TIMELINE, FROM LEFT: JAMES PALKA—GETTY IMAGES; ANDREW HARRER—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; CAULINE JEAN—SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL/AP; JEFF KOMALSKY—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; AP; WIN MONMEE—GETTY IMAGES; SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT/AP; GENE J. PUSKAS—AP

A DANGEROUS CLIMATE



**JAN. 8, 2011
GIFFORDS SHOT**

A gunman opens fire at an event in Tucson, Ariz., killing six and seriously injuring Rep. Gabby Giffords



**JUNE 14, 2017
SCALISE SHOOTING**

A left-wing extremist targets a GOP baseball practice, injuring Rep. Steve Scalise and others



**OCT. 2018
PIPE-BOMB ATTACKS**

16 packages containing pipe bombs are mailed to top Democrats



**OCT. 7, 2020
WHITMER KIDNAPPING ATTEMPT**

FBI foils a far-right militia plot to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer



◀
**OFFICERS FACE
OFF AGAINST
RIOTERS
ATTEMPTING
TO STORM THE
U.S. CAPITOL
ON JAN. 6, 2021**

tactics and readily accessible weapons,” according to a 2021 FBI analysis. The normalization of apocalyptic and menacing language online has also made it difficult to gauge whether a threat is imminent. In one recent case, authorities found an extensive, chilling trail of threats posted by a failed candidate for the New Mexico state legislature only after he was charged with orchestrating a scheme to shoot at the homes of several elected Democratic officials.

Far-right online communities, where talk of “civil war” and armed retaliation has become commonplace since the 2020 election, were flooded with angry messages after the attempted assassination of Trump. Some said they were taking his exhortation to “Fight! Fight! Fight!” literally. “They tried to kill my President,” one person posted on a pro-Trump forum. “I want revenge.” The FBI says threats of political violence have

**SELF-
RADICALIZING
‘LONE WOLF’
ACTORS
CONTINUE TO
BE THE MAJOR
DRIVER OF
POLITICAL
VIOLENCE**

spiked since the Pennsylvania shooting, with individuals online mimicking or posing as the shooter and spurring fears of copycats, according to Deputy Director Paul Abbate.

In the aftermath, Trump issued a rare call for unity. “This is a chance to bring the whole country, even the whole world, together,” he said. But it’s unclear how long the former President, whose campaigning leans heavily into incendiary speeches and often violent imagery, will stick to that subdued tone. It’s also unclear if Biden, who condemned the attack and called on Americans to “cool it down,” will dial back his campaign’s core theme that Trump represents an existential threat to American democracy.

There are already signs that a new tone from the top is unlikely. Republicans have blamed the shooting on Biden and his claim that Trump is a dangerous autocrat who needs to be stopped. Trump’s running mate, Ohio Senator J.D. Vance, said the Biden campaign’s messaging “led directly to President Trump’s attempted assassination.” Both sides have trafficked in baseless conspiracy theories. Georgia Republican Representative Mike Collins tweeted, “Joe Biden sent the orders.” Some on the left suggest that the Trump campaign faked the shooting with the help of the Secret Service, and that the blood on Trump’s ear came from gel capsules. Dmitri Mehlhorn, a Democratic fundraiser and strategist, sent an email questioning whether “this ‘shooting’ was encouraged and maybe even staged so Trump could get the photos and benefit from the backlash,” calling it a “classic Russian tactic.”

It’s possible for Americans to stop the cycle, experts say. “Americans could look in the mirror, be shocked by what they see, and stop normalizing the incendiary rhetoric and violence that is leading to these sorts of events,” says Kleinfeld. Or, she says, “they will point fingers, as is already happening, and use the opportunity to try to score political points. And if they do, it will continue to get worse.” □



JAN. 6, 2021
U.S. CAPITOL INSURRECTION
Attack by a pro-Trump mob seeking to prevent election certification leaves five dead and 140 injured



JUNE 8, 2022
KAVANAUGH ASSASSINATION PLOT
An armed man is accused of planning to murder Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh



OCT. 28, 2022
PAUL PELOSI ATTACKED
A far-right conspiracy theorist looking for Nancy Pelosi assaults her husband with a hammer



JULY 13, 2024
TRUMP SHOOTING
A gunman’s attempt to assassinate the former President wounds Trump and kills a rallygoer



*A Bitcoin mine sits
next to homes in
Granbury, Texas*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAKE DOCKINS FOR TIME



NATION

TECH RACKET

INSIDE THE “NIGHTMARE”
HEALTH CRISIS OF A TEXAS
BITCOIN-MINING TOWN

BY ANDREW R. CHOW

ONE EVENING IN DECEMBER 2023, 43-year-old Sarah Rosenkranz collapsed in her home in Granbury, Texas, and was rushed to the emergency room. Her heart pounded 200 beats per minute; her blood pressure spiked into hypertensive crisis; her skull throbbed. “It felt like my head was in a pressure vise being crushed,” she says. “That pain was worse than childbirth.”

Rosenkranz’s headache lasted for five days. Doctors gave her several rounds of IV medication and painkiller shots, but nothing seemed to knock down the pain, she says. This was odd, especially because local doctors were similarly vexed when Indigo, Rosenkranz’s 5-year-old daughter, was taken to urgent care earlier that year, screaming that she felt a “red beam behind her eardrums.”

It didn’t occur to Sarah that these symptoms could be linked. But in January 2024, she walked into a town hall in Granbury and found a room full of people worn thin from strange, debilitating illnesses. A mother said her 8-year-old daughter was losing her hearing and fluids were leaking from her ears. Several women said they experienced fainting spells, including while driving on the

highway. Others said they were racked by debilitating vertigo and nausea, waking up in the middle of the night midvomit.

None of them knew what, exactly, was causing these symptoms. But they all shared a singular grievance: a dull aural hum had crept into their lives, rattling their windows and rendering them unable to sleep. The hum, local law enforcement had learned, was emanating from a Bitcoin-mining facility that had recently moved into the area—and was exceeding legal noise ordinances on a daily basis.

Over the course of several months in 2024, *TIME* spoke to more than 40 people in the Granbury area who reported a medical ailment that they believe is connected to the arrival of the Bitcoin mine: hypertension, heart palpitations, chest pain, vertigo, tinnitus, migraines, panic attacks. At least 10 people went to urgent care or the emergency room.

The development of large-scale Bitcoin mines and data centers is quite new, and most of them are housed in extremely remote places. There have been no major medical studies on the impacts of living near one. But there is an increasing body of scientific studies linking prolonged exposure to noise pollution with cardiovascular damage. And one local doctor—ear, nose, and throat specialist Salim Bhaloo—says he sees patients with symptoms potentially stemming from the Bitcoin mine’s noise on an almost weekly basis. “I’m sure it increases their cortisol and sugar levels, so you’re getting headaches, vertigo, and it snowballs from there,” Bhaloo says. “This thing is definitely causing a tremendous amount of stress. Everyone is just miserable about it.”

Not all data centers make noise. And industry insiders say they have a technical fix for the ones that do, which involves replacing their facilities’ loud air fans, which prevent the computers from overheating, with much quieter liquid-based cooling solutions. But some of their touted methods, including “immersion cooling” in oil, are expensive and untested on a large scale.

A representative for Marathon Digital Holdings, the company that has owned the mine since December 2023, did not answer questions about health



impacts, but told *TIME* that it is working to remove the noisy fans from the site. “By the end of 2024, we intend to have replaced the majority of air-cooled containers with immersion cooling, with no expansion required. Initial sound readings on immersion containers indicate favorable results in sound reduction and compliance with all relevant state noise ordinances,” they wrote in an email. Marathon is one of the largest Bitcoin holders in the world.

The number of commercial-scale Bitcoin-mining operations in the U.S. has increased sharply over the past few years; there are now at least 137. And while similar medical complaints have been registered in other states, the Bitcoin-mining industry is urgently trying to push bills through state legislatures, including in Indiana and Missouri, that would exempt Bitcoin mines from local zoning or noise ordinances. In May, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt signed a “Bitcoin Rights” bill to protect companies and prevent any future attempts to ban the industry.

While some Granbury residents are fiercely protesting the mine, many others feel powerless to alter the will of a company with legal, political, and financial might. And the data-center industry at large is only growing more dominant, thanks to the twin forces

of Bitcoin mining and AI, the latter of which spends a vast amount of energy training generative models to find patterns in data sets. According to a recent report, data centers will use 8% of total U.S. power by 2030, up from 3% in 2022. And if operators locate the centers near existing communities and prioritize profits at their expense, then the story of Granbury could become the story of other small towns across America.

GRANBURY SITS ABOUT an hour southwest of Fort Worth in Hood County, home to a mostly rural and Republican population of around 65,000. Approximately a 15-minute drive south of Granbury’s charming historic town center—which includes a 19th century opera house—lies the Bitcoin-mining facility, consisting of over 140 squat metal boxes resembling shipping containers, housing over 30,000 computers. These computers started running in the summer of 2022, and seemed to be switched on all day and night.

The computers power a process called proof-of-work mining. Rather than relying on a central bank or governmental agency, Bitcoin is created, maintained, and guarded by watchdogs around the world known as miners, who prevent tampering through a complex cryptographic process and are rewarded with Bitcoin for doing so.



From left,
Constable John
Shirley, Cheryl
Shadden, and
Larry Potts
in Granbury

But the system also requires an immense and ever increasing amount of electricity. While Bitcoin's first miners were solo operators often working out of their bedrooms, the industry is now dominated by a handful of billion-dollar corporations that operate industrial-size server farms across the globe. In the month of March 2024 alone, the Bitcoin-mining industry generated a record \$2 billion in revenue.

Much of the American Bitcoin-mining industry can now be found in Texas, home to giant power plants, lax regulation, and crypto-friendly politicians. In October 2021, Governor Greg Abbott tweeted that Texas would soon be the "#1 [state] for blockchain & cryptocurrency." The following month, the Commissioners Court of Hood County approved the development of a cryptocurrency operation at a gas plant called Wolf Hollow II. The owners promised local jobs and said that they would mostly use "stranded energy" that would otherwise go unused.

In order to cool the machines, the site's operators attached thousands of fans to the containers, which churned constantly, emitting a vicious buzz. As more machines were switched on, the noise sounded like a ceiling fan, then a leaf blower, then a jet engine. It consumed afternoon dog walks and revved through

cloudless nights, vibrating the trailer homes of many of the low-income residents who live blocks from the facility.

At first, residents responded to the intrusion by vacating their porches, retreating inside, and turning up their fans and air conditioners to the max. But many still felt tremors in their beds—including Larry Potts, a 77-year-old retired pastor who lives up the road from the plant. Potts says he stopped sleeping and started losing hearing in both ears. In February, his heart gave out after another sleepless night; he was rushed to the hospital and kept alive by an external pacemaker. There, he was diagnosed with third-degree atrioventricular block, hypertension, and depression. "I'm sick of this world and all this mess around here," he says he told his wife that day, referring to the Bitcoin mine's noise. "We moved out here for the peace and quiet. But this has made me want to go."

Some nearby residents say they haven't been affected. But the number of strange medical emergencies in the area have piled up. In addition to Potts' discharge papers, TIME reviewed medical records provided by several Granbury residents. Hospital notes from 72-year-old Geraldine Lathers' three-day stay document new prescriptions for high blood pressure and vertigo. Jenna Hornbuckle, 38, lost hearing in her right ear and was diagnosed with heart failure; ear exams document her hearing loss along with that of her 8-year-old daughter Victoria, who contracted ear infections that forced doctors to place a tube in her ear. And Avari Burns, a 19-year-old cancer patient, says she suffered from crippling migraines at home—but whenever she went to a Fort Worth hospital for chemotherapy, the migraines subsided.

"WE'RE LIVING IN A NIGHTMARE," Sarah Rosenkranz says, sitting at a barbecue restaurant in downtown Granbury on an evening in May. As rock music blares from the speakers and other patrons chatter away, Rosenkranz pulls out her phone and clocks 72 decibels on a sound-meter app—the same level that she records in Indigo's bedroom in the dead of night. In early 2023, her daughter began waking up, yelling and holding her ears. She soon refused to sleep in her own room. She then developed so many ear infections that Rosenkranz pulled her from school in March and learned how to home-school her for the rest of the semester.

Over grilled salmon and hush puppies, Rosenkranz shares that her family has been sleeping peacefully at an inn downtown for the past three days in order to get away from the noise. But the next morning, after returning home, she contracts yet another migraine that lands her in urgent care.

Bhaloo, the ENT doctor in Granbury, says he's seen an uptick since the New Year in patients whose ailments—including ringing in their ears, vertigo, and headaches—could be related to the mine. "These people here, they're good country folks, and Bitcoin, to them, is almost a foreign alien thing," he says. "[The noise] is detrimental to their health and anxiety." Dr. Stephen Krzeminski, another Granbury ENT, agrees. "Sonic damage is real, there's no disputing that," he says. Krzeminski says he believes the mine is causing "mental and physical" health issues. "Imagine if I had a vuvuzela in your ear all the time," he says.

The level of noise is appalling to Dr. Thomas Münzel,

'We moved out here for the peace and quiet. But this has made me want to go.'

—LARRY POTTS

a German cardiologist who is a leader in the growing field of scientific researchers measuring the impact of urban and industrial noise on humans. In one study, he exposed young, healthy students to noise events up to 63 decibels, and found that their vascular function diminished after just a single night. In other studies, he's found that nighttime noise pollution directly leads to heart failure and molecular changes in the brain, which may lead to impaired cognitive development of children and make some people more prone to developing dementia. The fact that the Granbury Bitcoin mine is emitting 70 or even 90 decibels on a nightly basis is "like torture," he says. "The most spectacular cardiovascular diseases will develop. They have to stop the machines."

Studies have shown that human-caused noise pollution harms animals and wildlife, causing oxidative stress and memory loss in rodents, acute anxiety in dogs, and a decrease in forest growth. Shenice Copenhaver's dog, Persephone, started going bald and developed debilitating anxiety shortly after the Bitcoin mine began operating four blocks away. Directly next door, Tom Weeks' dog Jack Rabbit Slim started shaking and hyperventilating uncontrollably for hours on end; a vet placed him on the seizure medication Gabapentin. And Jerry and Patricia Campbell's centuries-old oak tree, which had served as the family's hub and protector for generations of backyard family reunions and even a wedding, died suddenly three months ago.

It's nearly impossible to prove the Bitcoin mine directly caused the afflictions of these specific animals and plants. But as the strange anecdotes collect, they've added to the stress of a town that feels under siege from all directions. "I've lived in Texas all my life, and I've never seen an oak tree be beautiful one year and die the next," Jerry Campbell says on his lawn, beneath the tree's gnarled, blackened limbs. "It's so strange."

HOOD COUNTY CONSTABLE John Shirley has spent months trying to find his own solutions to a problem that at times seems supernatural. As a former member of the Oath Keepers, a far-right militia whose leaders were convicted of seditious conspiracy against the U.S. government, Shirley is a somewhat divisive figure in the town. But lately Shirley has been laser-focused on the mine—an issue he considers apolitical. "When you've got Greenpeace supporting the same cause as a former Oath Keeper, what weird episode of *The Twilight Zone* are we in?" he says, chuckling darkly. (Shirley resigned from the Oath Keepers before Jan. 6, 2021, over "serious concerns" with the direction of the organization, he says.)

On a listless May morning before the sun has risen, Shirley is sitting in his truck across the road from the mine. He is used to getting up at this hour, as he's been taking decibel readings of the plant around the clock in order to write tickets against the mine's manager for disorderly conduct. Shirley sticks his meter out the window and records the sound at 91 decibels, which the CDC estimates as roughly in between the output of a lawn mower and a chain saw. This level of noise, the CDC writes, can cause hearing damage after two hours of exposure. And Texas state penal code deems any noise above 85 decibels unreasonable. Over the course of 2024, Shirley has recorded a noise above 85 decibels coming

from the plant more than 35 times.

Technically there is federal mandate to regulate noise from 1972—but it was essentially defunded during the Reagan Administration. This leaves noise regulation up to states, cities, and counties. New York City, for instance, has a noise code that officially caps restaurant music and air-conditioning at 42 decibels. Texas' 85 decibels, in contrast, is by far the highest state limit in the nation.

A representative for Marathon declined several interview requests with TIME, saying that the company would refrain from commenting publicly until Constable Shirley's "unwarranted" citations against the plant had been resolved. As Shirley sits outside the facility recording the pulsating drone, his nostrils flare and his voice rises with impatience. "When I was a murder investigator and someone killed somebody, I had the law on my side," he says. "With this, it's like I'm swatting at a rhinoceros."

Shirley's tickets added up to more than \$17,000. But Marathon, which earned \$165 million in revenue in the first quarter of 2024 and bragged to shareholders about "record earnings," protested the first batch of citations—and in a July jury trial requested by Marathon, its plant manager was found not guilty. County attorney Matt Mills now says he may open up a case against Marathon itself.

THE RESIDENTS OF GRANBURY feel they've been lied to. In 2023, the site's previous operator, US Bitcoin Corp, constructed a wall around the mine almost 2,000 ft. long and claimed that it had "solved the concern." But Shirley says that the complaints about the sound actually increased when the wall was nearing completion last fall. As complaints mounted at the top of 2024, the company contended it did not know about the extent of the sound issues. "Prior to the purchase, we were not aware of the noise issues," a Marathon representative wrote to TIME in an email in January. But Marathon's purchase agreement for the site, dated Dec. 15, 2023, clearly mentions the existence of the \$1.9 million "sound wall" built several months prior.

In an emailed statement to TIME

**'It's like I'm
swatting at
a rhinoceros.'**
—CONSTABLE
JOHN SHIRLEY

in June, Marathon said that 58 air-cooled containers have been removed from the site, and pointed to a road map that vows to convert 50% of the site's containers to immersion cooling by the end of the year. But the technique has potential drawbacks, including the difficulty of regularly performing maintenance on a computer submerged in oil, says Kent Draper, the chief commercial officer of the Bitcoin and AI data-center operator IREN. "Although it's been around for a long time in the industry, it's just not that widely adopted," he says.

Even Marathon expressed skepticism about its ability to convert its many machines to immersion technology in a 2023 year-end Securities and Exchange Commission report. "There is a risk we may not succeed in developing or deploying immersion-cooling at

▼
*Persephone,
a husky mix,
started going
bald after the
mine began
operating*



such a large scale to achieve sufficient cooling performance," the company wrote. In an email to TIME, Marathon wrote, "While we are confident in our ability to scale this new technology, it is our obligation, as a publicly traded company, to identify any potential risks from a financial perspective."

GRANBURY COMMUNITY MEMBERS are exploring political and legal avenues. A petition against the mine in Granbury and its "excessive and unhealthy noise" garnered 800 in-person signatures and was taken by representatives to the state Republican convention in San Antonio in May. County commissioner Nannette Samuelson hopes to pass resolutions in Commissioners Court urging state senators to draft legislation. But any statewide legislation is sure to hit significant headwinds, because the very idea of regulation runs contrary to many Texans' political beliefs. "As constitutional conservatives, they have taken our core values and used that against us," says Demetra Conrad, a city council member in the nearby town of Glen Rose.

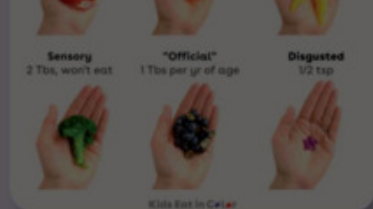
One woman, Cheryl Shadden—who has medically documented hearing loss—has retained the nonprofit Earthjustice to examine potential litigative routes. Deputy managing attorney Mandy DeRoche says Earthjustice is exploring the possibility of taking its own sound readings near the site.

As Bitcoin continues to gain value, miners are building progressively bigger operations, causing defunct gas plants and other fossil-fuel emitters to spring back into action. It is unclear whether states even have the energy capacity to support this new demand: in June, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick tweeted that Texans "will ultimately pay the price" for the growth of crypto and AI data centers, writing that they "produce very few jobs compared to the incredible demands they place on our grid." Regardless, Bitcoin lobbying groups are attempting to pass bills in state legislatures across the country, which would exempt similar operations from noise ordinances and local zoning laws. People have reported similar symptoms near Bitcoin mines in Arkansas and Williston, N.D. Ultimately, Granbury is just one canary of several in this new kind of mine.

In the weeks before this article's publication, two more Granbury residents suffered from acute health crises. The first was Tom Weeks, the owner of the hyperventilating dog. On July 2, Weeks, 64, rose after another sleepless night of listening to the mine and realized he couldn't breathe. He was rushed to a Fort Worth hospital, where he was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism—a blood clot blocking his lungs—and hooked up to an oxygen tank. Weeks was supposed to testify against Marathon in the jury trial, but was physically unable to do so. "This whole thing is an eye opener for me into profit over people," Weeks says in a phone call from the ICU.

The second person affected was 5-year-old Indigo Rosenkranz. On July 6, she suffered from a seizure and was taken to the emergency room, before being routed to a children's hospital in Fort Worth for further testing. Her mother Sarah was terrified and now feels she has no choice but to get a second mortgage to move away from the mine. "A second one would really be a lot," she says. "God will provide, though. He always sees us through." □

Want to Raise A
Critical Thinker?
Ask This!



TAKE THE
PRESSURE
OFF

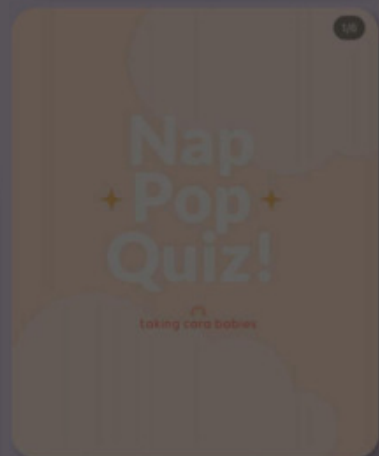
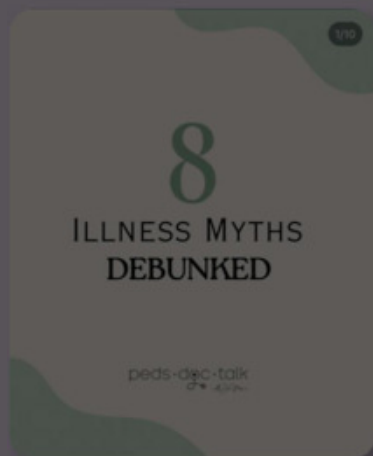
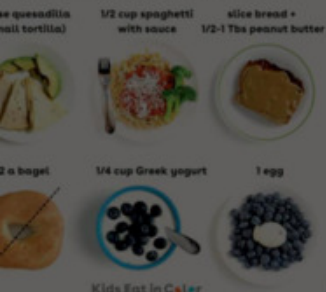
Putting pressure on mealtimes
directly leads to picky eating.



When Mother



4-6 grams of protein six ways
toddlers need roughly 16 g of protein a DAY



TAKING AWAY
DESSERT IS
NOT
EFFECTIVE
DISCIPLINE

and here's why...

big little feelings

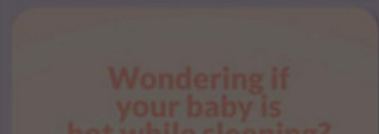
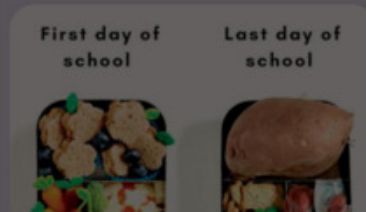
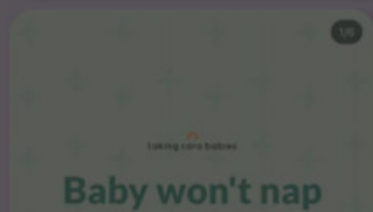


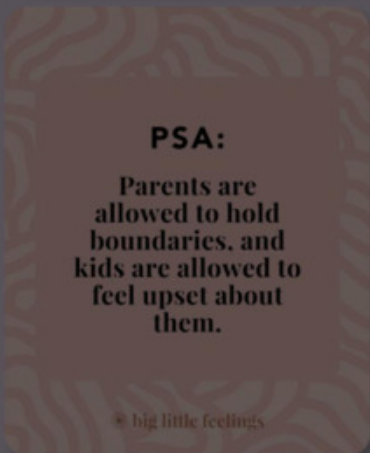
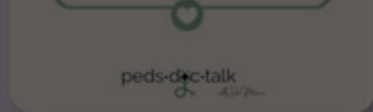
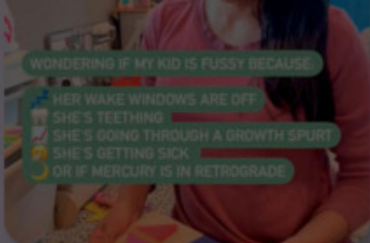
*They have advanced
degrees, kids of their
own, and massive
followings. A new kind
of parenting expert has
emerged online*

BY ELIANA DOCKTERMAN

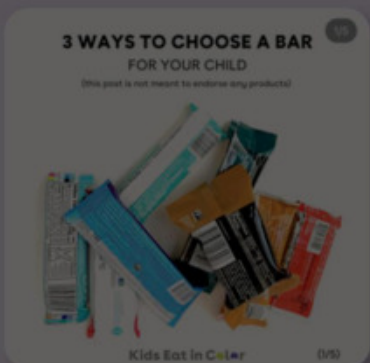


THINGS OUR
CHILDREN NEED TO
HEAR US SAY MORE





Knows Best



SOCIETY

T

THERE IS AN ART TO LAYING DOWN A NEW-born baby. Or, rather, a science. The American Academy of Pediatrics will tell you that babies need to sleep swaddled, on their backs, in an empty bassinet. But what if your infant abhors a crib? If you buy a newborn course offered by Cara Dumaplin, the former NICU and labor-and-delivery nurse who bills herself as a baby and toddler sleep expert, as I did when my daughter was 6 weeks old, you will get a video demonstration of how to make the dreaded chest-to-bassinet transfer. In it, a swaddled baby lies across Dumaplin's forearm, head resting in her palm. Dumaplin's thumb holds a pacifier in the child's mouth. Dumaplin doesn't rock the baby to sleep but rather moves her wrist to subtly jiggle the head back and forth. When the child's eyes begin to flutter, Dumaplin slips her into a crib. She then removes her forearm like a spatula from beneath a pancake.

Dumaplin, a mother of four, likens what she does across her platforms to the work she did translating medical jargon for new moms in the hospital. "When the doctor comes and says, 'I think we have a prolapsed cord and need a C-section ...' I'm putting it in layman's terms, like 'Your baby is telling us he's in trouble. But I've got you. I'm going to walk you step by step through this,'" she says. "I just took what I had been doing for years in the delivery room and did that online. Like 'These are the recommendations that your pediatrician is telling you in the office. Let me show you how to do it practically.'"

And many, many people would like to learn: Dumaplin's Instagram account Taking Cara Babies now has 2.7 million followers. But she is hardly the only mom on social media using her professional know-how to share—and sell—parental advice. She's part of a wave of women marrying the authenticity of a fellow parent with the credentials of a Ph.D., RN, or other distinguished degree, and leveraging Instagram and TikTok



to launch newsletters, podcasts, video courses, products, and books. There's registered dietitian nutritionist Jennifer Anderson (Kids Eat in Color, 2 million followers on Instagram); former kindergarten and first-grade teacher Susie Allison (Busy Toddler, 2.3 M); Kristin Gallant, who has a degree in maternal and child education, and licensed marriage and family therapist Deena Margolin (Big Little Feelings, 3.5 M); clinical psychologist Jazmine McCoy (The Mom Psychologist, 848 K); pelvic-floor physical therapist Sara Reardon (The Vagina Whisperer, 607 K); pediatrician Mona Amin (PedsDocTalk, 343 K); pediatric speech therapists Carly Tulloch and Katie Sterbenz (Wee Talkers, 132 K); postpartum and neonatal nurse and lactation counselor Karrie Locher (786 K); registered dietitian nutritionist Megan McNamee and occupational therapist Judy Delaware (Feeding Littles, 1.8 M); and more. Several have achieved fame offline as well: Becky Kennedy, the clinical psychologist better known as Dr. Becky (2.8 M), was interviewed by Oprah. Brown University economist Emily Oster (402 K), who authored the best-selling pregnancy-data book *Expecting Better*, appeared on *The Daily Show*.

If that list feels overwhelming, imagine them all in your feed, giving you tips on everything from dislodging boogers to negotiating over screen time. "When you're a new mother and exhausted, the last thing you want to do is read a 325-page parenting book," says Sara Petersen, author of *Momfluenced: Inside the Maddening, Picture-Perfect World of Mommy Influencer Culture*. "It's really tantalizing to believe that if I just spend five minutes on an expert's account, that could make a difference."

But it's never just five minutes, is it? And when it comes to the high-stakes job of raising a tiny human, it's never just a mindless scroll. For an anxious generation already trying to optimize every aspect of their lives, like reading dozens of reviews before purchasing the best air purifier, it's easy to fall down a dizzying rabbit hole of advice and wind up feeling more exhausted than enlightened. "Our parents could go to the library or get a referral from your pediatrician for a specialist. That's it.

They didn't have thousands of experts living in their back pockets at all times," Petersen says. "The immediacy and availability of the information encourages us to believe that we're negligent if we don't pursue it."

The mothers wielding professional expertise mean well. They want to help fellow parents for whom answers are elusive—even if in the aggregate, it can be a bit much. But stressed-out parents are also a major market. Dumaplin, who

published best-selling books that parents treated as childcare bibles—outlining how much weight a baby should gain and what to do in case of a fever. For slightly squishier problems, like which noise machine to buy when you're tired of shushing, friends and, in more recent years, internet-famous moms offered solutions.

But those two sources of information existed largely in separate spheres. Sure, the pediatricians would sometimes tout that they were dads too (and they were almost always dads). They might even invent products like the Snoo, a \$1,695 smart crib from the doctor behind *Happiest Baby on the Block*. But they were not answering questions in real time via Instagram stories. They didn't make lists of products to add to registries or write out scripts of what to say to a toddler during a tantrum.

Mommy bloggers and later momfluencers—terms that can feel dismissive and are not universally adored by those grouped into these categories—shared stories about picky eating or the isolation of motherhood. They offered a window into their own (often beautiful, sometimes messy) homes as a way to establish a relationship with their followers, but their advice was typically rooted in experience, not professional training.

The rise of the Mom Expert speaks to the desire for both credentials and connection. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of these accounts saw their numbers skyrocket during the pandemic. "Parents felt so alone and like they were going crazy," says McCoy, the Mom Psychologist, whose YouTube channel offers guidance on concerns like aggressive or clingy behavior. She still hears from parents who sign up for her Positive Discipline Academy as a stopgap while their children wait months to see a therapist in person. "The system is completely broken," she says.

Even doctors who kids see more regularly have to rush through appointments. "How much time do you get with your pediatrician? Six minutes?" asks Dumaplin, who is married to a pediatrician. "You better have your questions listed. God forbid that baby cries in the office, and four of your six minutes are cut into, right? But here I'm accessible on your phone. And relatable



began streaming her classes in 2015, now has a website full of courses and a team of 40 to help answer parents' questions. When I ask just how big her business is, she sighs, emphasizing that her Will I Ever Sleep Again? newborn class still costs \$79, despite the rising cost of living. "I will tell you we have over 500,000 families at Taking Cara Babies," she says after a moment of hesitation, a figure she later corrects to 700,000. "You can do the math."

FOR AT LEAST the past half-century, there have been two key sources of parental advice: the Experts and the Moms. Pediatricians like Dr. Spock

like ‘Oh, OK, so when Cara’s babies were young, she didn’t have it all together. She’s a nurse, and this was hard for her. Maybe it’s OK that it’s hard for me.’”

Big Little Feelings, another pandemic breakout, began after Gallant herself became exasperated by what the Instagram algorithm was feeding her. “It was a lot of perfect little sandwiches cut into shapes and matching outfits,” she says. When she Googled for tips on handling her small kids’ big emotions, “it was really high-level, really clinical, really buttoned-up. There was nothing that was fast and actionable.”

She began texting questions to her best friend Margolin, who studied under Dan Siegel (the famous professor of psychiatry who wrote *No Drama Discipline*). They turned their conversations into social media posts, courses, and, last year, a podcast called *After Bedtime* that debuted at No. 1 on the iTunes charts. The goal is to present science-backed parenting strategies in a way that feels digestible. “In order to have access to this type of information, you needed to have at least a college degree, maybe a master’s degree,” says Gallant. “You needed to have hours at the end of your day to read this information. You couldn’t be walking off a long shift at Walmart and have no help and be a regular person and have access to this information. They don’t necessarily need to hear about the amygdala firing off... though there is a neuroscience section in our course, if you really want to know.”

ON AN EARLY *After Bedtime* episode titled “My Marriage Sucks After Having Kids—Deena’s on the Brink of Divorce,” Margolin vented about her husband’s working during his parental leave and mused on whether they should separate. “Showing that we are human is so important,” Margolin says. “My husband and I went into it feeling like we are a team and can tackle anything that comes our way—and then, surprise, we’re on different pages at times. We had to really work through the struggle of how to parent together, which a lot of people go through but nobody really talks about. All you see on social media is the happy, smiling photos of couples.” Lately, she’s been posting about trying to get pregnant again. Gallant,

meanwhile, recently shared a picture of a pill in her hand to reveal she’d started taking an antidepressant.

Every Mom Expert must decide how much to disclose about her life—some show their kids, others emoji-out their faces—but given that motherhood is key to their social media presence, and there’s a premium on authenticity online, it must be at least enough to build trust with their followers. As a result, people form parasocial relationships



with them, feeling like they’re friends even though they’ve never met.

Such perceived intimacy can be lucrative since brands want to work with figures who have devoted followings. Not only have almost 215,000 kids potty trained through Big Little Feelings’ course, which costs \$34 a pop, Margolin and Gallant have partnered with companies like Fisher-Price. At one point during our conversation, they start singing the praises of Boll & Branch sheets. “My husband literally won’t sleep in anything else,” gushes Margolin. “Well, he is a Virgo,” Gallant replies, as if recording an ad for one of their sponsors. She adds that they would never work with

a brand they weren’t “obsessed with.”

Different Mom Experts set different standards when it comes to sponsorships. Dumaplin, who posts affiliate links to items like sleep sacks and blackout curtains, gets a small cut every time someone buys something. But she draws the line at creating sponsored content, which is how most influencers make their money. “I don’t want to say this, but I was offered basically a \$1 million contract this year for a baby product. And I turned it down,” she says. “If I took money from a brand, how does a parent know that I think this is the best swaddle if that company paid me?”

Amin, who goes by Dr. Mona, now sees patients one day a week and spends the rest of her time producing social media content, YouTube videos, and a podcast. She lists 38 products, from baby clothes to breast pumps, on her site along with discount codes. “I only will partner with a brand that has a product that I would recommend to my patients,” she says.

But the downside of having so many people feel like they know you is that quite a few also form opinions about both your child-rearing philosophy and your life choices. There’s an entire forum on Reddit called r/parentsnoark dedicated to mocking mothers in this space, complaining when their tactics don’t work, and venting about the sometimes unrealistic practices they espouse. A weekly thread devoted to the Big Little Feelings women dissects their lives, accusing them of manufacturing drama for the sake of content and questioning how they spend their money. They also receive some pushback in the comments on their Instagram account. “It’s usually just like ‘Wow, your eyebrows look really sh-tty today’ or ‘Wow, your voice is just really annoying,’” says Gallant. “It’s just one of those things that comes with the territory that isn’t the most fun thing. But the good news is it’s rarely about our work.” As Petersen wrote in *Momfluenced*, some of this criticism is rooted in anger over mothers’ monetizing the traditionally unpaid labor of parenting. Some of it is the unfortunate cost of being a woman on the internet.

Anderson, of Kids Eat in Color, started her account in 2017 after her

son wasn't gaining weight and "fell off the growth chart." She was making adorable bento-box lunches to get him to eat, cutting fruits into star shapes, and a friend suggested she post the pictures on Instagram. "It turned into a really time-consuming hobby," she says. Eventually she created courses like her Reverse Picky Eating Program as well as recipes and printable meal plans. Now she finds herself the target of criticism from two factions. "I get people who say, 'If you give your kids sugar, you're going to give them cancer,' and people who say, 'If you tell your kid they can only have two pieces of candy, you're going to give them an eating disorder,'" she says. "My life's ambition at this point is to figure out how to run my business without social media. The comments are not as nice as when I started." In June she became the subject of a thread on the subreddit when she posted watermelon in her Instagram Stories on Juneteenth. "I clearly had not done all my research about Juneteenth and was 100% unaware of the historical piece. I thought I was pulling a food out of a list of foods from a book I read to my kids about the holiday," she says. "It was a complete mistake on my part."

A certain corner of the internet also flew into a tizzy when it was unearthed, in 2021, that Dumaplin had contributed—about \$1,000 total from 2016 to 2019—to Donald J. Trump for President Inc. and the Make America Great Again Committee. Dumaplin declined to comment on the donations. When I ask about criticism more broadly, she says, "I very much care about what people think of me. I wish I cared less. I do. But I care about people and I care about their opinions. I care about their feelings, and that's who I am."

LIKE MANY A MILLENNIAL parent, I lived in fear of Getting It Wrong, so I ordered Dumaplin's course pre-emptively rather than out of desperation. (The head-jiggling trick only sort of worked for me: I'd rock the baby for half an hour just to have her wake up in the bassinet half an hour after I put her down. But who's to say if that was due to the instruction or my execution or my baby liking to power nap?) My daughter, now 8 months old, is a terrific sleeper, often

doing an 11-hour stretch in her crib, though sharing that will certainly doom us to a sleep regression. I, on the other hand, do not always sleep through the night. When I wake up with an urgent question about my baby, I use an AI tool on economist Emily Oster's website to offer me a research-backed response. Dewey, as the bot is called, provides citations to Oster's books and blogs, as well as the original studies themselves.

"There are more college-educated parents today than there were in the past, so they feel that they have the capacity or the knowledge to collect information and figure out what's

'The immediacy and availability of the information encourages us to believe that we're negligent if we don't pursue it.'

SARA PETERSEN
AUTHOR OF MOMFLUENCED



best for their kids," says Kei Nomaguchi, a professor of sociology at Bowling Green State University who studies parenthood.

The question is whether all this information is helpful or ultimately overwhelming. "Parents are now responsible for being experts in so many different areas. You should be your child's registered dietitian and occupational therapist and literacy coach and sleep instructor," says Anderson. "And if your child has a problem, it's your fault."

Dumaplin started her business to ease anxiety. After she had her fourth child, she began working in an ob-gyn's office where she'd treat women at their six-week postpartum appointment. She kept hearing the same refrain: "The baby won't sleep." She wished she could go home with the parents—and then she did, starting with in-home coaching

and, as demand grew, group sessions, and, finally, online classes. Over time, she's watched parental anxiety grow. Now with TikTok, she says, parents are fed a new piece of baby-rearing advice every minute: "It's information overload. This expert says this, but this expert says if I don't do it their way, I'm going to damage my baby. Do I think this generation is almost paralyzed by all the information? Yes."

Or as Amin puts it, "We are so obsessed with information and doing it right and what the data show—and we're also obsessed with not f-cking up our kids to a point that we're actually going to f-ck them up."

While every generation has wanted to get parenting right, millennials' anxiety may be motivated by socioeconomic factors. We are the first generation in a long time not finding greater financial success than our parents. "The middle class and upper-middle class used to think their kids would be OK—they would end up upper-middle class," says Nomaguchi. "I think today middle-class parents aren't really sure whether their kids will make it because of increased competition in the labor force globally."

It sounds dramatic to say we're worrying about our children's success when trying to get them to nap, but when you repeatedly read that sleep boosts brain development, suddenly their college-admissions chances seem tied to how many hours they slumbered. That notion is fueled by images on social media of parents raising seemingly perfect kids, each post of a child eating asparagus a reminder of how you failed to get something green into your kid that day.

The truth is sometimes there's simply no right answer. Take baby-led weaning, the feeding method du jour in which parents let babies hand-feed themselves solids rather than spoon-feeding them purees. "Obviously, I contribute to this, but I literally get the question 'If I didn't do baby-led weaning, have I ruined my child?' an astonishing number of times," says Anderson. "It really doesn't matter."

Dumaplin, too, insists there's no tried-and-true formula. "If what you're doing is working, you don't have to change it," she says. "You are the expert of your baby." □



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5. MINE + FARM INN | Guerneville, Calif.
6. FONTAINEBLEAU | Las Vegas
7. UNDER CANVAS LAKE POWELL—GRAND STAIRCASE | Big Water, Utah
8. KANTISHNA ROADHOUSE | Denali National Park, Alaska
9. MODERN ELDER ACADEMY | Santa Fe, N.M.
10. OMNI HOMESTEAD RESORT AND WARM SPRINGS POOLS | Warm Springs, Va.
11. WARREN STREET HOTEL | New York City
12. THE MANCHESTER | Lexington, Ky.
13. MAUI CULTURAL LANDS | Lahaina, Hawaii
14. THE RABBIT HOLE | Kansas City, Mo.
15. BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM | Buffalo, N.Y.
16. CPKC STADIUM | Kansas City, Mo.
17. INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM | Charleston, S.C.
18. BOWIE HOUSE, AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION | Fort Worth
19. AGUA CALIENTE CULTURAL PLAZA | Palm Springs, Calif.
20. MARIE SELBY BOTANICAL GARDENS | Sarasota, Fla.
21. WORLD EQUESTRIAN CENTER | Ocala, Fla.
22. MONTGOMERY WHITEWATER | Montgomery, Ala.
23. PUTEF 'T-AWT | Cacouna, Quebec
24. POTLATCH CLUB | Bahamas
25. HAVILA POLARIS AND HAVILA POLLUX | Norway
26. LE GRAND MAZARIN | Paris
27. LA MAISON RABELAIS | Amboise, France
28. CORTINA D'AMPEZZO | The Dolomites, Italy
29. ANANTARA CONVENTO DI AMALFI GRAND HOTEL | Amalfi, Italy
30. BATHS OF CARACALLA | Rome
31. MATTERHORN ALPINE CROSSING | Switzerland and Italy
32. RAFFLES LONDON AT THE OWO | London
33. CERN SCIENCE GATEWAY | Meyrin, Switzerland
34. DUNAS DE FORMENTERA | Formentera, Spain
35. VERMELHO HOTEL | Melides, Portugal
36. EDP ART REEF | Albufeira, Portugal
37. HIGHLAND BASE | Kerlingarfjöll, Iceland
38. KUNSTSILO | Kristiansand, Norway
39. IRIS | Hardanger Fjord, Norway
40. 100 PRINCES STREET | Edinburgh

41. VIA TRANSILVANICA | Putna to Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania
42. HORNSGATAN SLOW FASHION DISTRICT | Stockholm
43. VYN | Simrishamn, Sweden
44. REVERB BY HARD ROCK | Hamburg
45. REETHAUS | Berlin
46. DE DURGERDAM | Durdendam, the Netherlands
47. MELESIN DISTILLERY | Leskovik, Albania
48. HÖFE TRAIL | Osttirol, Austria
49. COMMUNAL KUTAIISI | Kutaisi, Georgia
50. BAR MAGRITTE | Brussels
51. AVIVA STUDIOS AT FACTORY INTERNATIONAL | Manchester, England
52. SUN RANCH | Coopers Shoot, Australia
53. WUKALINA WALK | Tasmania, Australia
54. WA EV NETWORK | Western Australia
55. MT COOK LAKESIDE RETREAT | Lake Pukaki, New Zealand
56. DIVE TUTUKAKA | Tutukaka, New Zealand
57. MUSEUM OF SOLUTIONS | Mumbai
58. NAAR | Himachal Pradesh, India
59. MANAM CHOCOLATE | Hyderabad, India

60. TEAMLAB BORDERLESS DIGITAL ART MUSEUM | Tokyo
61. SANXINGDUI MUSEUM | Guanghan, China
62. ARANYA | Beidaihe, China
63. AIR CCCC | Singapore
64. FOUR SEASONS RESORT KOH SAMUI | Koh Samui, Thailand
65. BURHAN WILDERNESS CAMPS | Bardiya, Nepal
66. BELMOND'S EASTERN & ORIENTAL EXPRESS | Malaysia
67. SANGWA CAMP | Haa Valley, Bhutan
68. BAMBU INDAH | Ubud, Indonesia
69. SAKA MUSEUM | Jimbaran, Indonesia
70. MUSEUM OF MOUNTAIN JEWS | Red Village, Azerbaijan
71. SHARAAN NATURE RESERVE | Saudi Arabia

72. DAR TANTORA | AlUla, Saudi Arabia
73. BAB AL SALAM MOSQUE | Muscat, Oman
74. ONE ZA'ABEEL | Dubai
75. ABRAHAMIC FAMILY HOUSE | Abu Dhabi



ATTEST

Our annual list of the globe's most desirable destinations takes you from urban art hubs to remote rain forests—and even Antarctica. Start here, and find the rest of our top 100 places to stay and things to do at time.com/worldsgreatestplaces

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TOM FROESE FOR TIME



- 76. OUR HABITAS RAS ABROUQ | Dukhan, Qatar
- 77. PEARLING PATH | Muharraq, Bahrain
- 78. ZEYREK CINILI HAMAM | Istanbul
- 79. DIYARBAKIR EXPRESS | Turkey
- 80. NEW GOURNA VILLAGE | Luxor, Egypt
- 81. GROOTBOS FLORILEGIUM | Gansbaai, South Africa
- 82. MAGUGU HOUSE | Johannesburg
- 83. ANGAMA AMBOSELI | Kimana Sanctuary, Kenya

- 84. KWETU NAIROBI | Nairobi
- 85. IVOMO TEA COOPERATIVE | Gisakura, Rwanda
- 86. MOROCCAN CULINARY ARTS MUSEUM | Marrakech, Morocco
- 87. NATURAL SELECTION'S GUIDED CYCLING SAFARI | Okavango Delta, Botswana
- 88. KAMBA AFRICAN RAINFOREST EXPERIENCES | Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Republic of the Congo
- 89. BOCA DE AGUA | Bacalar, Mexico
- 90. OLIVIA FOUNDATION | Mexico City
- 91. SILVESTRE NOSARA | Nosara, Costa Rica
- 92. SILVERSANDS BEACH HOUSE | St. George's, Grenada
- 93. CASA LUCIA | Buenos Aires
- 94. IBERÁ PROVINCIAL RESERVE | Corrientes province, Argentina
- 95. RUTA DE LOS ABASTOS | O'Higgins region, Chile
- 96. YUM CHA | Santiago, Chile
- 97. SINCHI WAYRA | Yasuni National Park, Ecuador
- 98. ORIGEM | Salvador, Brazil
- 99. CAIMAN HOUSE | Yupukari, Guyana
- 100. WHITE DESERT | Antarctica



LAHAINA, HAWAII

MAUI CULTURAL LANDS

Restoring paradise

When wildfires tore through Maui's west side in August 2023, killing 102 people, destroying 1,400 homes, and incinerating over 20,000 trees, the future of tourism to the Valley Isle was thrown into question. Now, with nearly 85% of the island's jobs still reliant on the tourism industry, Maui is at a crossroads. While local resorts

housed 8,000 displaced residents in 40 hotels for months after the fires, many residents blamed the fire's quick spread partially on their clear-cutting and non-native landscaping. Hoping to secure more resident housing, Maui's mayor proposed a bill to eliminate 7,000 short-term rentals by 2026, which is currently being contested. An island that has, since a strategic pivot to tourism over 40 years ago, depended on tourism for economic growth is searching for a sustainable way forward.

So when Maui officially reopened to tourism in November, it leaned more heavily into a new ethos:

regenerative tourism, in which visitors volunteer and make conscious choices to support locally owned and environmentally sound businesses, with the aim of leaving the islands better because of their visit.

Maui Cultural Lands (MCL), one of the longest-running Indigenous-owned nonprofits in west Maui, provides visitors hands-on ways to make their vacations count. Since 1999, Maui Cultural Lands has been taking volunteers out to pull invasive plants, re-plant baby trees, or plant native seedlings along the watershed in Honokowai. MCL director Ekolu Lindsey, a native Hawaiian

whose Lahaina house was destroyed in the fires, has welcomed hundreds of volunteers since tourists returned.

"This is not ecotourism," Lindsey says, referencing an industry vulnerable to greenwashing. "We are going to work, and it's fun." He teaches about Hawaiian culture, where aloha means adding value to your presence. "We help people think of Hawaii as home," he says, "Not your home, but someone's home."

AFTER THE FIRES, Duane Sparkman, one of Lindsey's board members and chief engineer at Royal Lahaina Resort, began cataloging the

thousands of beloved native trees—like mountain apple and kukui nut—that were lost from local backyards. MCL quickly partnered with Sparkman’s newly created nonprofit Treecovery, which is now reforesting Lahaina and Kula at no cost to residents.

“We’re bringing tourists in to help rebuild,” Sparkman says. Today, visitors can see the trees they planted through MCL and Treecovery growing around Lahaina, and in Ka’anapali resort lobbies. Other Maui resorts work with similar projects, like Fairmont Kea Lani’s partnership with Skyline Conservation, through which guests can donate or volunteer to restore native forests.

After the work, more fun awaits. In Lahaina, Mala Ocean Tavern and Aloha Mixed Plate are open for dining, as is Moku Roots, which relocated to Upcountry after the fires. Visit the Old Lahaina Lu’au, considered the state’s most authentic tourist-facing cultural performance, or Maui Ku’ia Cacao Farm. In June, the venerable Kapalua Food and Wine Festival returned, and in October, the state’s largest celebration of food, the Hawai’i Food and Wine Festival, returns to Ka’anapali.

Tourism on Maui remains fraught. While touristy areas like Wailea appear untouched, roughly 1,600 Lahaina residents were still displaced as of May. Signs in restaurant windows urge visitors not to ask workers about their experience with the fires. For now, Hawaii lovers can do their small part by getting their hands dirty, then savoring *loco moco* whipped up with aloha.

—Michele Bigley



BEIDAIHE, CHINA

Aranya

Dream world design

Seaside Aranya is luring young Chinese visitors with its otherworldly serenity, despite being only about 2.5 hours from Beijing. They come to take selfies with minimalist buildings like architect Dong Gong’s isolated Lonely Library with ocean views, or the Dune Art Museum’s domed spaces in the sand, or to lounge in a pool at the recently opened Hidden Place Hotel. The Cloud Center is a new venue hosting art, theater, and music events, and the enclave hosted a Louis Vuitton menswear show last year.

—Peter Neville-Hadley

KOH SAMUI, THAILAND

Four Seasons Koh Samui

White Lotus preview

The third season of *White Lotus*, HBO’s hit satire of dream vacations, is filmed at the Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui on Thailand’s second largest island, HBO confirms to TIME. The first two seasons—filmed at Four Seasons resorts on Maui and in Sicily—sparked booking booms, so travelers will want to plan their Thai holiday before the new season airs in early 2025.

—Adam Robb

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA EV Network

Go electric

There are more reasons than ever before to road-trip Australia’s vast west coast, with most of the 98 charging stations of a new EV highway now live. The 4,300-mile-long WA EV Network connects Perth to Kununurra in the far north and southeast to Eucla. Rent an EV and set off on an all-electric journey to storied spots like the food-and-wine region near Margaret River or Exmouth, the gateway to snorkeling with whale sharks; at Esperance, enjoy epic surfing or wind down from the journey on chalk white beaches.

—Terry Ward



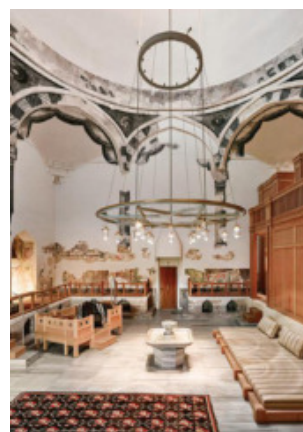
KRISTIANSAND, NORWAY

Kunstsilo

Epic art in a grain silo

When it opened in May, Kunstsilo breathed new life into a 1935 grain silo, and the Scandinavian art scene. The awe-inspiring museum opens in a basilica-like central space, where sections of the original silos have been cut away. The works housed within the building (on track to achieve a major sustainability certification this year) make up the world’s largest collection of Nordic Modernist art. Kunstsilo also hosts family-oriented workshops and concerts.

—T.W.



ISTANBUL

ZEYREK CINILI HAMAM

A spa with history

When visitors recline on the polished marble platform in the Zeyrek Cinili Hamam, ready to be scrubbed clean under a soaring dome studded with star-shaped skylights, they’re not just bathing in luxury—they’re soaking in history. The grand Turkish bath (*hamam*) reopened in May after lying derelict for decades. It was originally built in the 1500s atop one of Istanbul’s massive Byzantine-era cisterns by Mimar Sinan, the Ottoman Empire’s greatest architect. A 13-year restoration uncovered fragments of the vibrant blue-and-white patterned tiles that once adorned the bath’s interior. These finds are displayed in an adjacent new museum that digitally reconstructs the tiles’ original layout and traces where some of the missing pieces ended up—including in London’s Victoria and Albert Museum. Also on view are recovered Byzantine stone carvings and pottery, and a collection of exquisite bathing bowls, mother-of-pearl combs, and other items that bring Ottoman *hamam* culture to life.

—Jennifer Hattam

MALAYSIA

BELMOND'S EASTERN & ORIENTAL EXPRESS

Rails fit for royals

After a yearslong hiatus, the *Eastern & Oriental Express* train is once again chugging through Southeast Asia, with 15 luxuriously restored carriages and an open-air observation car. The multinitight tours take passengers between Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and other cities, with excursions such as snorkeling in Pulau Payar Marine Park and an excursion to one of the world's oldest rain forests. In the dining car, chef André Chiang serves Malaysian specialties, and evenings are best spent in the Piano Bar, listening to Nanyang jazz with a cocktail.

—Michelle Tchea





BERLIN

Reethaus

An offbeat venue

Newly opened music venue Reethaus is remarkable for its radical concrete-and-glass architecture with a thatched roof, its world-class sound design, and the eclectic lineup it hosts. Legendary Indian flutist “Flute” J.A. Jayant and a live show of the score for *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*, the 2022 documentary about Nan Goldin, are just two examples. A larger “campus,” called Flussbad, will expand in 2025 to include a hotel and a clubhouse.

—Gisela Williams

KANSAS CITY, MO.

The Rabbit hOLE

Where storybooks come to life

Longtime owners of the beloved former local bookstore the Reading Reptile spent nearly a decade working with hundreds of authors and illustrators to feature licensed content for this astounding immersive children’s museum, opened this spring in a century-old warehouse. Like *Alice into Wonderland*, visitors go down the rabbit hole (literally, through winding tunnels) into the worlds of classic and contemporary storybooks, and meet life-size characters. Kids can also create their own books in the story lab.

—AnneLise Sorensen

NOSARA, COSTA RICA

Silvestre Nosara

A family-friendly surf resort

Nosara is famed among surfers for its consistent waves—but not its kid-friendliness. Now Silvestre offers families a luxe option of residential-style suites with full kitchens stocked with local provisions. Amenities include a surf school (for all who can swim) and use of the hotel’s collection of custom performance surfboards. —Annie Daly



GUERNEVILLE, CALIF.

Mine + Farm Inn

Smokable Sonoma

A nine-room former fruit and hops farm is now a cannabis-friendly take on an old-fashioned B&B. Homegrown cannabis is doled out in prerolls for guests to consume outdoors on the lush lawn, under the shady terrace by the ping-pong table, or from the hot tub. A seasonal harvest menu profiles the genetics, THC level, terpenes (scent and flavor compounds), and typical effects of each. Guests may also arrange an “Elevated Experience” dinner, with locally sourced menus that include cannabis as a flexible ingredient—perhaps enriching a dry rub, baked into dessert, or as a smokable flavor pairing.

—Kelsy Chauvin

GISAKURA, RWANDA

IVOMO TEA COOPERATIVE

Among the tea leaves

Rwanda’s lush, emerald landscape is best experienced up close. At Ivomo Tea Cooperative, opened last year, visitors learn about the country’s tea—considered among the best in the world for single-origin, whole-leaf green and black brews—by picking the small leaves, pounding them with a mortar and pestle, and finally tasting the drink in the co-op’s tea room. Beyond teamaking, the cooperative has expanded its ecotours to include bird-watching, nature hikes, canoeing, fishing, and a local food excursion. But the opportunity to connect with expert teamakers is the biggest draw. If travelers are lucky, they’ll meet Consol’ee, a radiant tea picker who demonstrates harvesting techniques and “baptizes” good students with sprinkles of tea leaves on their heads.

—Rosalind Cummings-Yeates



HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

NAAR

Mountaintop fine dining

If anyone can inspire diners to venture outside their comfort zones, it’s Prateek Sadhu. After stints at Noma, Alinea, and the French Laundry, the trailblazing Kashmiri chef introduced fine-dining Indian tasting menus to Mumbai in 2016 with *Masque*. Then, last November, Sadhu opened the singular Naar at the Amaya boutique hotel in a quiet hamlet in Himachal Pradesh. The looming question was: Will diners make the trek to experience his bold vision for Himalayan cuisine? Judging by the steady flow of traffic snaking up the mountain roads to Naar, they will. Inside, Sadhu guides 16 guests at a time through Himachali yak cheese, juniper-smoked lamb with Kashmiri *mushqbudji* rice, Naga bamboo-shoot pickles, and *galgal* lemons. It’s a culinary tour well worth the trip.

—Sarah Khan

ANTARCTICA

WHITE DESERT

Polar protection

Patrick Woodhead has spent months in the Antarctic wilderness, setting records as part of the youngest and fastest team to reach the South Pole in 2002, and later as leader of the first team to make an east-to-west traverse. Once, trapped in an expedition tent during a storm, he fantasized about enabling travelers to immerse themselves in the sense of remoteness and isolation one experiences on the high polar plateau, only with gourmet meals and a cozy bed.

In 2005, he started small with a few mountain tents on the lunar Schirmacher Oasis, a spot never seen by tourists. Now, White Desert welcomes fewer than 300 guests per eternal-daylight season at two luxury camps made up of convivial bubble huts in Queen Maud Land, surrounded by majestic nunataks, or rocky outcrops. Once-in-a-lifetime activities include visiting the South Pole and the emperor penguin colony at Atka Bay, and exploring ice waves threaded with turquoise rivers.

“We’re able to see the penguins really early in the season, when the chicks are still fluffy, resting on their parent’s feet,” says Woodhead. “It’s incredible what they go through, with life at the mercy of the weather for them and for us alike.”

Living in harmony with the environment here is a key concern. Antarctic tourism numbers have steadily

risen in recent years, and the continent now sees more than 100,000 visitors each year. The cumulative impact can be significant: emissions from ships, a risk of oil spills and hitting marine animals, importing invasive species, potentially changing animal behavior patterns, and erosion of fragile environments concentrated around key landing sites.

Although the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and the Protocol on Environmental Protection

set regulations for tourism organizers, day-to-day management remains self-regulated, and some travel groups have been accused of greenwashing their efforts. With White Desert, Woodhead is charting a less impactful path, and striving to set best practices.

While most visitors to Antarctica approach the coastlines by cruise ship, White Desert brings its visitors in on one weekly flight from Cape Town, which for efficiency is shared with scientific teams traveling to

the continent for work. The whole operation hinges on its private blue ice runway and small propeller aircraft fitted with landing skis. White Desert was the first on the continent to use sustainable aviation fuel, which has a lower soot content (to reduce any albedo effect that hastens melting), blending the maximum 50% regulations currently permit.

White Desert’s comfortable, all-weather living quarters are also designed to leave no trace. The hard-shell pods have





no foundations, all waste is shipped out, the water is heated by solar arrays, and soaps are biodegradable. Green hydrogen power is in the cards soon as well, Woodhead says.

For visitors, gazing out over the raw, untouched white desert is breathtaking and humbling all at once, a stark reminder of the planet's power, and its need for us to protect its coldest corners. A soft blanket and a whisky on the rocks await.

—Annabel Illingworth



MEYRIN, SWITZERLAND

CERN Science Gateway

A science museum like no other

CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, carries out serious scientific exploration—it's home to the Large Hadron Collider, the world's largest particle accelerator—and the new Gateway, opened in fall 2023, provides a family-friendly, admission-free bridge to understanding the mysteries of the universe. Inside the astounding Renzo Piano–designed building, labs and exhibition spaces bring science to life for all ages: workshops range from making slime detectors to using liquid nitrogen to explore the properties of superconductors.

—Karen Burshtein

SANTIAGO, CHILE

Yum Cha

A teahouse meets fine dining

Chile, surprisingly, has higher per capita tea consumption than China or Japan. At Yum Cha, chef Nicolás Tapia's 10-course tasting menu thoughtfully pairs teas from around the world—oolong from Taiwan, red tea from South Korea—with local produce and seafood. The combinations are spectacular.

—Nicholas Gill

OCALA, FLA.

World Equestrian Center

Horse-country escape

The World Equestrian Center's 378-acre, oak-lined campus is the largest such complex in the U.S. and hosts a biannual hunter/jumper series and Saturday-night Grand Prix with a \$100,000 purse, drawing athletes from around the world. In March, it opened a new 390-room hotel, the Riding Academy, with trophy-style lamps and stirrup-like accessories, furthering a theme and further enhancing the inland allure of central Florida's rolling horse country.

—Terry Ward



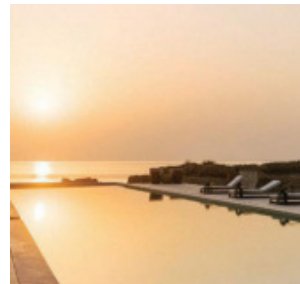
ABU DHABI

Abrahamic Family House

Holy gathering place

The Abrahamic Family House combines a mosque, synagogue, and church, each with breathtaking modern design. Opened to the public in March 2023 with a focus on peaceful coexistence and interfaith learning, the center is an active place of prayer, hosting more than 250,000 visitors and 250 events in its first year.

—Nicola Chilton



DUKHAN, QATAR

OUR HABITAS RAS ABROUQ

A remote desert escape

Qatar's profile may have grown after the 2022 World Cup, but the country largely remains synonymous with its capital of Doha. The few intrepid travelers who venture into the country beyond are most likely to make a pilgrimage to *East-West/West-East*, artist Richard Serra's 2014 installation where four steel columns loom over the dunes. Until this spring, not much else appeared for miles in any direction. But now day trippers can make a stay out of it, as Habitas set its eyes on the country's remote western coastline, at the edge of a UNESCO-protected reserve in Ras Abrouq. Just a few minutes past Serra's work, on a bluff overlooking the waves, Our Habitas Ras Abrouq's 42 tented villas piled with Bedouin textiles are a plush place to bed down. Guests can try their hand at Qatari Sadu weaving, go diving with whale sharks, join a starlight sound ceremony, or simply watch the sunset from the villas' oversize terraces with private plunge pools. "There's a curiosity as to why Ras Abrouq," says Habitas CEO and co-founder Oliver Ripley. "What's interesting about Qatar is that there's so many layers to discover."

—Sarah Khan

ODZALA-KOKOUA NATIONAL PARK, REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

KAMBA AFRICAN RAINFOREST EXPERIENCES

AI-aided ape viewing

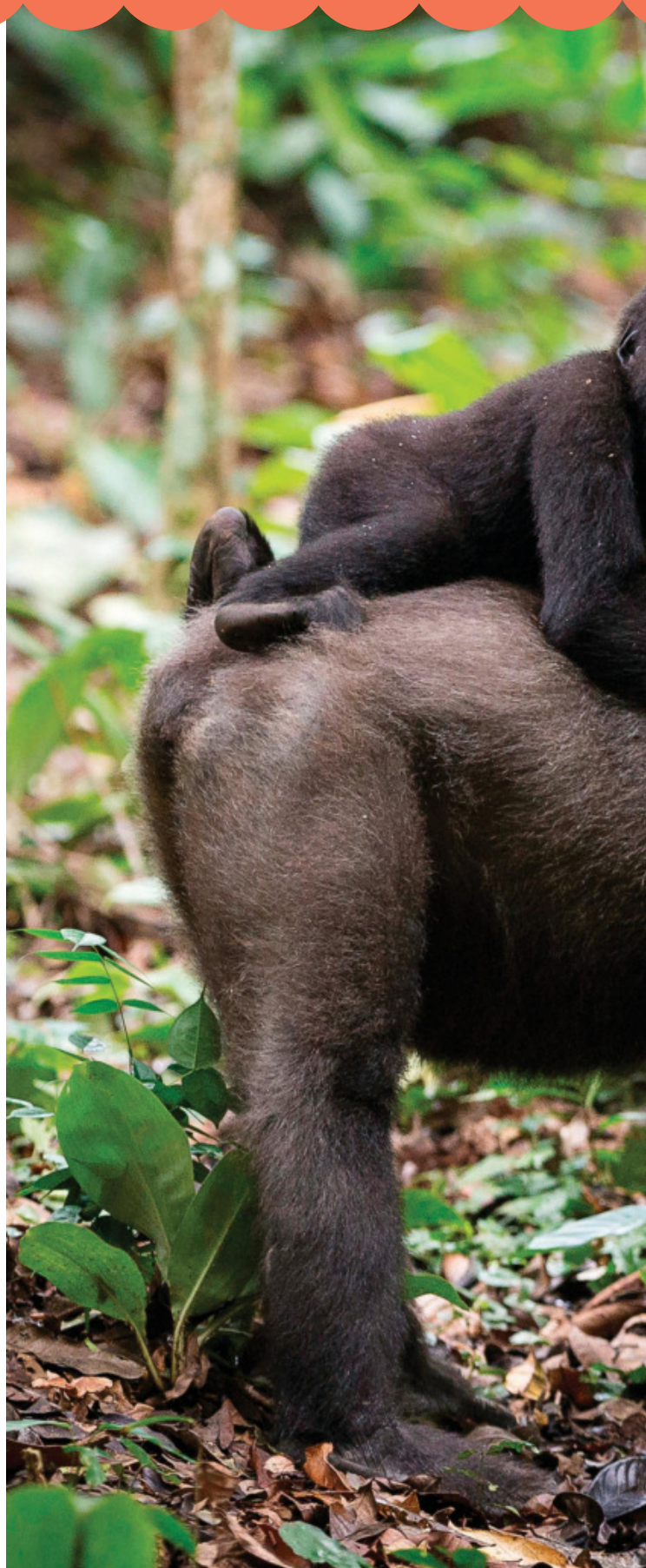
Part of the larger Congo Basin, the 90-year-old Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of the Congo (also known as Congo-Brazzaville) is considered “the lungs of Africa”: the largest carbon sink in the world, absorbing more carbon than the Amazon. The area, home to more than 10,000 species including the endangered western lowland gorilla, is little visited by travelers—it’s estimated that only a few hundred people visit each year. Those numbers are low partly because the Congo is often confused for its conflict-riddled neighbor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and partly because of a lack of tourism infrastructure. Kamba, a company that focuses on low-impact ecotourism adventures and is the only private operator in the park, is working to change that—and improve the experience using AI.

Kamba sponsors the work of primatologist Magdalena Bermejo, who currently lives on-site at Ngaga Lodge, one of Kamba’s three safari camps. Since arriving in Africa roughly 30 years ago, she has become the world authority on this type of great ape; what Jane Goodall did for chimps in Tanzania, Bermejo has done for this species of gorilla in the Congo. For about three decades, what she learned about the gorillas came from firsthand observation. But within the past two years, Bermejo has installed around 50 cameras throughout the

parkland near Kamba to gather footage of the primates. A team of more than two dozen scientists wrote code to sort the trove of data, and developed a unique AI model for studying the great apes. Beyond just identifying if the movement in the video is of gorillas (as opposed to other animals), the AI also groups videos based on which ape is pictured and categorizes its facial expressions. The latter helps provide clues as to what potential stressors or stimuli exist in their environment and affect how they live. From identifying these behaviors, the scientists can use that information to help conserve their species, by making the habitat more favorable to them. In turn, what they learn could apply to the conservation of other animals elsewhere in the world.

It also leads to a richer gorilla-trekking experience for Kamba’s guests, as guides can better locate, identify, and explain the animals’ behavior. Having a better understanding of how the gorillas will behave can allow guides to position guests in the best possible spot for viewing the animals.

But perhaps most important, it keeps the lungs of Africa breathing. The gorillas are vital for spreading seeds through their droppings, and many of the trees here owe their existence to these animals. Without them, this critical forest would struggle. —Bailey Berg





YASUNÍ NATIONAL PARK, ECUADOR

SINCHI WAYRA

Experience the Amazon

Scouting river dolphins, caimans, monkeys, and rare birds; hiking and canoeing through the jungle; and fishing for piranhas are all part of the program on a trip to Yasuní National Park. The rain forest's unique flora and fauna remain under threat, but Edwin Gualinga, former president of the local Sani community at Rio Napo, has dedicated his life to preserving this ecosystem. He opened the rustic Sinchi Wayra eco-lodge—constructed from local natural materials—in March 2023 with five rooms with private baths, a dining area, and a kitchen in a riverside garden. Visitors explore the breathtaking beauty of the Amazon wilderness with English-speaking guides, experience the Kichwa culture, and directly support the community: a portion of the proceeds goes toward local school and infrastructure projects. —Astrid Därr



ALULA, SAUDI ARABIA

DAR TANTORA

A rustic dive into the past

AlUla Old Town is one of the most impressive heritage sites in Saudi Arabia, but within the town itself is Dar Tantora The House Hotel, the first and only hotel built directly out of the 800-year-old mud-brick houses that were once a pivotal stop along the incense trading route through the Arabian Peninsula. Opened in May, the hotel even kept the original historic art, heavy wood doors, and candlelit hallways. A pool, spa, cigar lounge, and two restaurants modernize the stay, but the idea behind Dar Tantora is to feel the area's history: the hotel offers traditional Bedouin experiences such as ancient breadmaking, coffee ceremonies, and storytelling, and ushers guests around town in vintage Rolls-Royces to archaeological sites like Hegra and to more modern spots like Design Space, a new global design center.

—Paul Feinstein



TOKYO

TEAMLAB BORDERLESS DIGITAL ART MUSEUM

Out of bounds

International art collective teamLab puts an exceptional twist on immersive art experiences. In February, it opened its new permanent home in Tokyo. The museum is a “group of artworks that form one continuous, borderless world,” reacting to one another and to spectators. In *Universe of Water Particles on a Rock Where People Gather*, a simulated waterfall cascades down the walls, changing based on how people move through the gallery. In *Bubble Universe/Microcosmoses*, flickering spheres of light react to the humans nearest them, creating a hypnotic ripple effect that can never be replicated.

—Ashlea Halpern

PARIS

Le Grand Mazarin

Showstopper

With hundreds of hotels in Paris, Le Grand Mazarin still manages to stand out for its luxury and maximalist aesthetic. A seafoam green pleated-silk ceiling, tasseled sconces, frescoes, canopied beds, and salmon pink wardrobes set a sophisticated salon vibe. Downstairs, there's a *hamam*, spa, and pool under a vaulted, painted ceiling. —Devorah Lev-Tov



ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA

Silversands Beach House

Clifftop in the Caribbean

Grenada celebrates its Golden Jubilee of Independence in 2024. The island's newest accommodations include 28-key Silversands Beach House, a boutique sister property to the sleek Silversands Grand Anse (both came through Hurricane Beryl intact). Guest rooms and a panoramic suite sit atop a cliff overlooking secluded Portici Beach; several others cascade down the slope, and five suites sit beachfront near the infinity pool. Snorkeling is available, and Grenada boasts the world's first underwater sculpture park on view.

—Johanna Read



TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

wukalina Walk

Hike through Aboriginal history

For more than 65,000 years, the *palawa*, or Tasmanian Aboriginal people, have called wukalina in northeastern Tasmania home. On wukalina Walk, hikers follow *palawa* guides over 22 miles of breathtaking white sand beaches, granite headlands, and coastal heathland, staying three nights in Indigenous-inspired huts and a light-keeper's cottage along the way, and enjoying native *palawa* fare such as pickled samphire (a coastal plant) and smoked muttonbird.

—Terry Ward

LUXOR, EGYPT

New Gournia Village

Modern mud castles

The midcentury modern architect who is arguably the most relevant to today's climate-changed world is Egyptian visionary Hassan Fathy, a pioneer in sustainable design. Fathy elevated mud-brick construction, and now several buildings within New Gournia, an entire mud-brick village he built in Luxor in the mid-1940s, have been restored. Design fans can tour the town's mosque, theater, and Khan, a crafts training center, via New Gournia's Center for Sustainable Architecture.

—Gisela Williams

SANTA FE, N.M.

MODERN ELDER ACADEMY

Midlife self-care

It says a lot when the term most often associated with a particular stage of life is *crisis*. Youth is venerated, old age commemorated, but entrepreneur and author Chip Conley is determined to radically reframe the popular view of middle age, giving it the glowing appellation *midlife chrysalis*. He's spreading his lessons on how to beat the midlife doldrums through his books (*Learning to Love Midlife*, published in January), TED talks, and in person at the Modern Elder Academy (MEA), founded in 2018.

Conley describes MEA as the world's first “midlife wisdom school,” and in May he opened a new campus at Rising Circle Ranch, a 2,600-acre regenerative horse ranch outside Santa Fe, N.M., following on the success of its first location in Baja, Mexico. The school's retreats invite students to relax in stylish surroundings as they dig into big questions, including one Conley poses: “Ten years from now, what will you regret if you don't learn it or do it now? This gives us the opportunity to feel anticipated regret, which is a form of wisdom.” Now 63, Conley says the combination is key: “changing the habitat changes the habits.” Personal growth is especially enticing when the habitat is the dramatic landscape of New Mexico, with luxury resort trimmings.



In an era of commercialized self-care, wellness retreats open at a fast clip, many with the same regurgitated messaging. But Conley's own late-in-life arrival to MEA—he made his name as a hotelier before joining Airbnb as head of global hospitality and strategy—uniquely positions its approach to enlightenment. One manifestation is a new partnership with longevity company Blue Zones to host workshops on leading a long and fulfilling life. Conley cites a Yale study that

found a positive approach to aging lengthened participants' lives by 7.6 years, more than regularly exercising or quitting smoking. "It's not just about extending one's life," says Conley, "but deepening it."

MEA harnesses the power of the setting to guide middle-aged students on its key pillars: navigating transitions, cultivating purpose, and owning wisdom. As Conley says, "nature is a teacher," so sessions unfold on horseback over the soaring desert plains, or while

hiking trails through flourishing arroyos. This year, the Santa Fe academy will also feature a bevy of notable guests: *Eat Pray Love* author Elizabeth Gilbert and humanitarian Tererai Trent will lead a retreat on "awakening magic"; writer Pico Iyer on navigating the "seasons of life"; and Franciscan friar Richard Rohr on spirituality.

Class time is buoyed by a strong sense of community; it helps to grapple your way through middle age with like-minded friends

(and certainly making new friends in middle age is rare enough). This is where the MEA excels, with a growing roster of over 5,000 past participants from around the globe.

The resort also runs a range of online courses, but achieving inner peace is easier when you can soak in a hot tub and curl up in high-thread-count sheets. As you sip fireside margaritas under string lights, at peace with yourself, maybe midlife isn't so bad after all.

—AnneLise Sorensen



UBUD, INDONESIA

BAMBU INDAH

Shoots and ladders

Bamboo is a family affair for John and Cynthia Hardy. The couple opened the bamboo-built Bambu Indah, meaning “beautiful bamboo,” in 2008, but only now—after a newly completed renovation—has the 23-room sanctuary grown into its name. Whimsical accommodations, several designed by John’s daughter Elora and built by son Orin, include the snail-shell-inspired New Moon House, the inverted basket-style Copper House, and the hobbit-like Guadua House. Eschewing the manicured grounds of the area’s other resorts in favor of edible gardens, an underground mushroom farm, and rice paddies, Bambu Indah platforms natural luxuries in one of Bali’s most spectacular landscapes. More than 100 stairs and a bamboo-covered mining elevator lead to bamboo bridges that traverse tropical jungle and a playground of spring-fed swimming pools. Dusk lures guests to the cliff-top bar to watch the sun sink behind rice fields.

—Cynthia Rosenfeld

TOMORROW'S GREATEST PLACE TO WORK

Saudi's ground-up development, New Murabba, presents endless opportunities for entrepreneurship and growth

When the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced its ambitious Saudi Vision 2030, it outlined a plan to diversify its economy to incentivize growth in non-oil sectors to help ensure ongoing prosperity. Now, New Murabba, a meticulously planned downtown development in the heart of Riyadh, is quickly becoming an exemplar of that vision, with near-endless opportunities for those who will work and do business there.

As New Murabba comes to fruition, it's shaping new standards for smart, sustainable urban development in the Kingdom and leading Riyadh's charge to become a modern metropolis and a top global destination for doing business. Here are some of the elements business leaders and employees can look forward to.

Economic Impact and Opportunities

New Murabba, set to officially launch phase one in 2030, is expected to contribute to the economic diversification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. "We have a blank canvas,"

says New Murabba CEO Michael Dyke of the ideally located 19-square-kilometer project. "Within this enormous space, we can create physical assets which will lend themselves to entrepreneurs being able to deploy technology and their core business in whatever ways they wish."

High-Tech Infrastructure and Innovation

While many companies are forced to work within existing cities and retrofit them according to their needs, New Murabba represents a unique opportunity to create a purpose-built environment from the ground up. That means that architects, urban planners, and designers can incorporate everything that the workplace of the future needs to succeed.

The development's signature feature, the Mukaab, a colossal 400-meter cube, will symbolize technological innovation and immersive experiences. Designed to house sound engineering, holography, and design, the Mukaab is set to become one of the

most complex structures globally, establishing Riyadh as a hub for technological advancement.

Convenient, Connected City

To ensure accessibility and ease of navigation, New Murabba will adopt an urban planning philosophy where all essential services are within a 15-minute reach. The city will boast plenty of walking and cycling paths as well as green spaces. These features will enhance business efficiency and employee satisfaction by minimizing commute times and providing plenty of areas outside to relax and unwind.

As New Murabba progresses towards its 2030 debut, it stands as a testament to Saudi Arabia's ambitious vision for the future. Combining innovation, sustainability, and connectivity, this development will attract global investment and transform Riyadh into a modern, vibrant metropolis. With its diverse offerings and strategic planning, New Murabba is set to become a leading destination for business and urban living on a global scale.

Learn more about New Murabba at time.com/newmurabba/tgp/work

LAKE PUKAKI, NEW ZEALAND

MT COOK LAKESIDE RETREAT**Billion-star dining**

Perched atop a mountain plateau on New Zealand's South Island, the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve is among the best places on the planet to gaze up at the stars. There, at the Mt Cook Lakeside Retreat, you can marvel at no less than a billion of them, paired with pinot noir and charred venison. The luxurious lodge, skirting Lake Pukaki, now offers dinner and a show like no other. It begins with a six-course tasting menu, with dishes like Manuka honey-glazed alpine salmon and pasture-raised beef with a raspberry puree and pink flower petals. Then migrate to the wine cellar, which adjoins the region's sole observatory. The latter houses a high-power, fully automated telescope to view Saturn's rings, star clusters, and impossibly distant nebulae in brilliant detail. There's even an attached DSLR camera to accommodate take-home astrophotography. The experience is offered nightly, and could even include a glimpse of the elusive southern lights. —Brad Japhe



KERLINGARFJÖLL, ICELAND

HIGHLAND BASE**All-weather adventure**

There are two seasons at Highland Base in Kerlingarfjöll, the off-road adventure resort that opened in 2023 within a geothermal nature reserve amid Iceland's mountain glaciers. In summer, guests can hike and e-bike in unyielding sunlight before dipping into the Highland Baths, which include thermal pools, a cold plunge, and sauna. In winter, reaching this unspoiled moonscape of powder-coated volcanoes is a hard-earned six-hour odyssey from Reykjavik, requiring Super Jeep transport to navigate the snowy terrain beyond the highway. The payoff is endless winter sports, including snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and backcountry skiing in virgin snow before you settle back into picture-window pine lodges and A-frame huts for a roasted-lamb supper to whet your appetite for the evening's star attraction: the northern lights. —Adam Robb



JOHANNESBURG

Magugu House**A new fashion mecca**

One of South Africa's most important fashion designers, Thebe Magugu, has opened his first brick-and-mortar, complete with two microgalleries, in a 1930s heritage building in Johannesburg. Magugu, who has collaborated with Dior and shown collections at London and Paris Fashion Weeks, is known for colorful storytelling, and adds to the city's thriving fashion scene.

—Mary Holland

DUBAI

One Za'abeel**World-first skyscraper**

The new One Za'abeel is a head turner, dual towers rising on either side of a highway, linked by the world's longest cantilever, which hangs 300 ft. in the air. It houses two of Dubai's splashiest new hotels: One&Only's first urban resort and SIRO, a fitness-themed hotel. Inside, the Link is lined with a dizzying array of restaurants and bars, and atop is Tapasake, a sexy pool club that spans the length of the Link's roof.

—Sarah Khan

CHARLESTON, S.C.

International African American Museum**Honoring the Black experience**

The U.S.'s second largest African American museum opened last summer on Gadsden's Wharf, where African captives once arrived by the thousands. Inside, a glassed entrance opens to 8-ft. screens flashing faces of the African diaspora, teasing the interactive journey of tragedy and triumph that unfolds over more than 150 artifacts, 30 works of art, and nearly 50 films. Preserving personal legacy is also central; the Center for Family History offers genealogy services and records oral histories.

—Ronda Racha Penrice

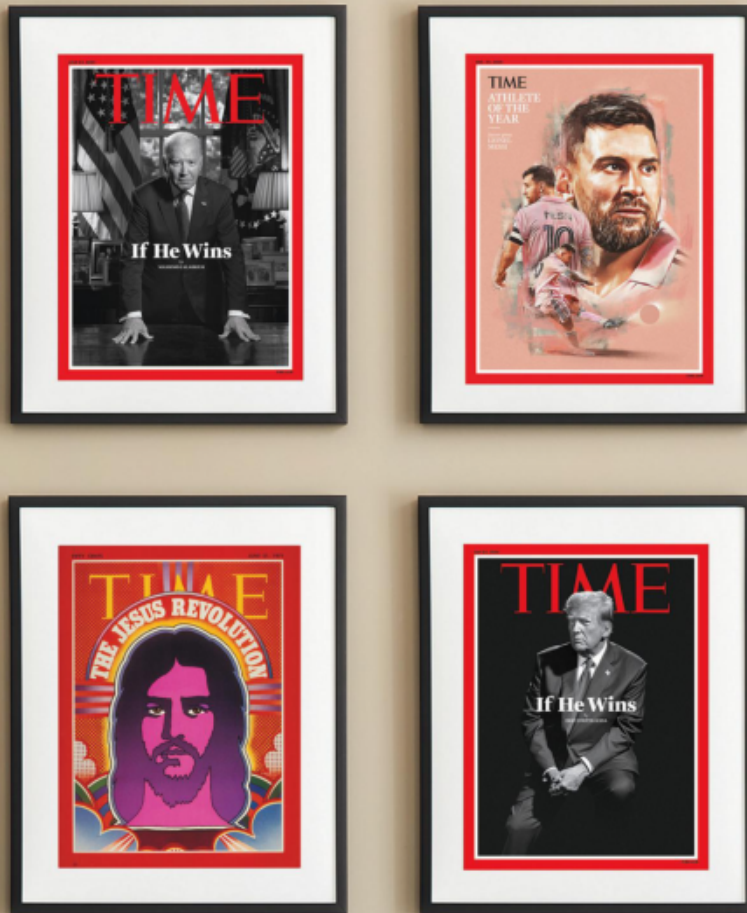


CACOUNA, QUEBEC

Putep 't-awt**Beluga viewing**

A stunning trail and observatory that opened in June overlooks the St. Lawrence Estuary, letting visitors safely watch endangered beluga whales calve, feed, and breed from June to September. The Putep 't-awt viewing area is a partnership between the Indigenous Wolastoqiyik Wamsipekuk First Nation and Quebec-based marine-mammal research organizations. —T.W.

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KIMANA SANCTUARY, KENYA

ANGAMA AMBOSELI

*Home of the
“super tuskers”*

Elephants are common on African safari, but spotting a “super tusk” — a massive pachyderm with ivories over 100 lb. apiece — is a rarity. Targeted by poachers for decades (and still hunted in Tanzania), only about 20 remain, living mainly near the Kimana Sanctuary, widely regarded as Kenya’s first community-owned reserve. Now, visitors can see them at contemporary safari camp Angama Amboseli, a 10-suite luxury lodge with exclusive use of Kimana, that is playing an outsized role in protecting the megafauna and alleviating human-wildlife conflict in the area. — *Tanveer Badal*





HARDANGER FJORD, NORWAY

IRIS

Floating food journey

Iris takes guests on a unique culinary quest. Opened in 2023 and awarded a Michelin star in May, it starts with a boat ride to a tiny island. Diners eat in a floating spherical structure surrounded by greenery and glaciers, as they learn about the dishes, local sourcing, and sustainable food practices. The goal, chef Anika Madsen says, is “to pull nature through the windows and onto the plates.” The “expedition dining” experience, starting at \$429, is in high demand.

—Jessica Benavides Canepa



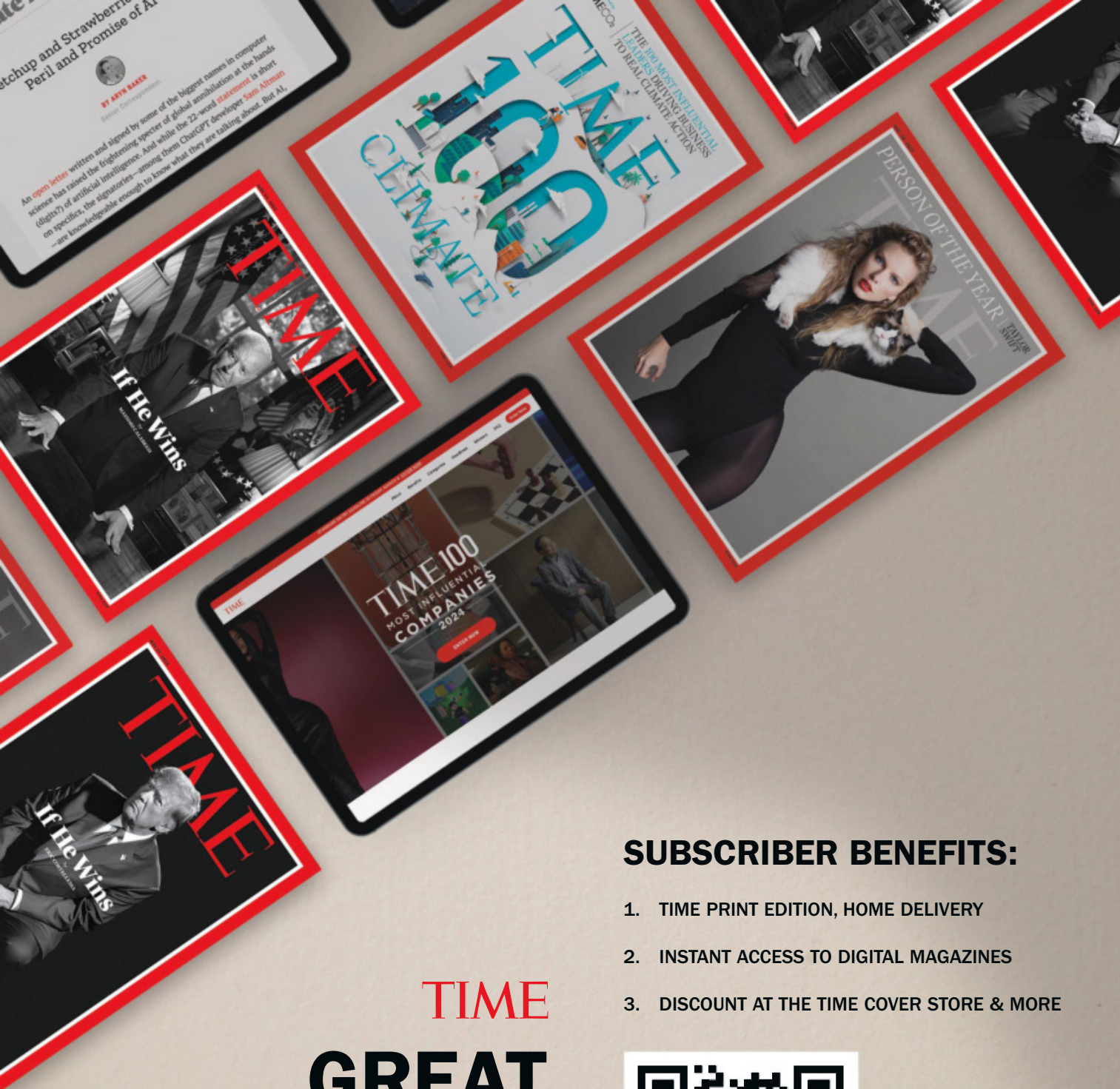
MEXICO CITY

OLIVIA FOUNDATION

A stunning art hub

In February, an exhilarating new arts institution opened its doors in the Mexico City neighborhood of Roma Norte. Set in a renovated neoclassical townhouse, the Olivia Foundation draws on the world-class private collection of a Mexico City native couple, focused on postwar female artists like Helen Frankenthaler and Ruth Asawa as well as a new generation of creators including the British artist Jadé Fadojutimi and the Brazilian painter Sophia Loeb. —Michael Snyder

ANAKA AMBOSELI: COURTESY AGAMA AMBOSELI; OLIVIA FOUNDATION: SERGIO LOPEZ/OLIVIA FOUNDATION



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Time Off



GO BIG OR GO HOME

BY STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

With *Twisters*, Lee Isaac Chung illustrates the promise and pitfalls of indie directors making blockbusters

INSIDE

A NEW *DECAMERON*, MORE THAN SIX CENTURIES LATER

THE MOST COMPELLING CELEBRITY MEMOIRS

SNOOP DOGG ON HIS SUMMER OLYMPICS GIG

NO ONE MAKES A MOVIE IN A VACUUM. Even filmmakers working with the most micro of microbudgets want their films to be seen; movies are, after all, a mode of communication, a way of celebrating shared experiences or locating common ground amid differences. It's no wonder filmmakers who make a big splash with a small film often want to stretch their horizons by working on a larger canvas, with a fatter budget and flashier stars, all in the service of speaking to us.

One of the surprise indie hits of 2020 was Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari*, an intimate, semi-autobiographical drama about a Korean American family struggling to establish a farm in rural Arkansas. *Minari* earned six Academy Award nominations; one of its stars, Youn Yuh-jung—as a swearing, card-playing Korean grandma—won for Best Supporting Actress. And its success brought Chung a golden opportunity: this summer sees the release of *Twisters*, his reimagining of Jan de Bont's nature-gone-wild thriller *Twister*, from 1996. In *Twisters*, Daisy Edgar-Jones and Glen Powell play rival storm chasers tearing through Oklahoma's Tornado Alley—though it turns out that even though she's a serious-minded researcher and he's a YouTube star, they have more in common than they think.

Twisters is a movie with a \$200 million budget; *Minari* cost \$2 million. That makes Chung just the latest in a long line of directors who have grabbed the chance to leap from low-key indie success to blockbuster attention grabber. More broadly, though, a big swing like this is a test of how we moviegoers feel about filmmakers as artists. Everyone loves an underdog hero. But what happens when a filmmaker sets their sights on a bigger project, one designed to reach a wider audience—and, ideally, to net a handsome payoff? Is that selling out or stepping up? And in a climate where movies designed to be viewed on the big screen face an uncertain future, is it an act of hope or an exercise in futility?

PEOPLE WHO WATCH lots of movies tend to treasure indie filmmakers. Unbowed by big-studio expectations, they're often the people doing the most interesting work. That's why we feel stung when a filmmaker appears to be selling out. Suddenly, somehow, they're no longer on "our" side. As consumers of culture and everything else, we may be motivated by money—who isn't, to some degree? But we expect purity from creative people.

In the world of moviemaking, that's an idea that could hold us back—especially if we want smarter, better mainstream movies. Let's take Rian Johnson, whose first feature, the 2005



Edgar-Jones,
Powell, and
Chung in
Oklahoma:
big movie,
bigger sky

teenage noir *Brick*, earned enough acclaim to allow him to make movies on an increasingly larger scale. On the ladder of big-ticket potential crowd pleasers, you can't get much higher than a *Star Wars* film, and Johnson got his chance with the 2017 *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Last Jedi*. But hardcore fans of the series rebelled. Many felt he'd taken the story and the characters in the wrong direction. More insidious were fans' complaints about what they called, to use a slippery and increasingly sinister word, the story's wokeness. As Emily St. James wrote in a 2017 Vox article parsing fans' complaints, the movie's "millennial good guys are a young white woman, a black man, a woman of Asian descent, and a Latino man, while its millennial bad guys are two white dudes." That didn't sit well, she said, with a fandom that "has long been presided over by white guys."

Though *The Last Jedi* performed well enough at the box office, it's generally treated by fans as a *Star Wars* fail. But it's a pretty terrific movie, an emotionally generous work with both a sense of humor about itself and a sense of joy. In other words, Johnson's sensibilities shine through the template laid out by George Lucas nearly a half-century ago. If you care about the greater landscape of film, that's exactly what you should want when a thoughtful director takes on a franchise property.

But the realities of modern big-ticket filmmaking aren't for the faint of heart. Chloé Zhao's austere, low-budget *Nomadland* won three Oscars in 2021, including Best Picture and Best Director. (The third award, for Best Actress, went to the movie's star, Frances McDormand.) By that time, Zhao's next movie, the Marvel entry *Eternals*—heavy on green-screen special effects and featuring a roster of stars

including Gemma Chan, Angelina Jolie, and Salma Hayek—was already in the works. But when it was finally released, in November 2021, neither critics nor Marvel fans liked it. Part of the problem, Zhao suggested in a 2022 *Empire* interview, was that amid the pandemic, audiences weren't in the mood for what she described as a film "about existential crisis, both for humanity and God." That may sound like the understatement of the century, but Zhao was onto something. The ideas she cares about, and the intimate style of filmmaking that's clearly her forte, were quite obviously at odds with the Marvel machine—though that's Marvel's problem, not hers. Sometimes indie filmmakers who stretch their wings learn plenty about the kinds of movies they *don't* want to make.

For indie filmmakers who haven't won an Oscar, a big movie can serve as a calling card in the greater world. Colin Trevorrow made his debut with the charming 2012 sci-fi comedy *Safety Not Guaranteed*, though his *Jurassic World* movies are what made him famous. And some filmmakers build a career by making increasingly ambitious films over several years. In the early 2000s, Greta Gerwig was one of DIY cinema maestro Joe Swanberg's go-to performers. She hopscotched from mumblecore to directing the megahit *Barbie*, with *Lady Bird* and *Little Women* in between.

ALWAYS, THOUGH, the big question is this: Can a director with a light touch, like Chung, bring his special sensibility to a bigger project—one that comes with outsize expectations attached? Studios—in *Twisters*' case, Universal—have something to gain by hiring a Lee Isaac Chung to direct a big movie. His name brings cachet to a film that might otherwise be considered just another workaday blockbuster. And depending on how high your expectations are, *Twisters* is an engaging enough summer diversion. Chung knows he's making a monster movie, one in which the chaos of nature reigns: he hints at this in big ways and small ones, with dashes of wit. (One tornado whirls toward a small-town movie theater that happens to

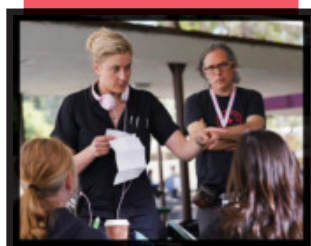
have programmed a classic-monster-movie festival.) The special effects are regal and terrifying: at one point, twin twisters show up on the horizon, slender and dust-clouded at the bottom but fanning out, like Tiffany lily vases, at the top. There's a great deal of driving, as the storm chasers zip around in search of their next conquest, and there are many, many shots of debris flying into the air and then, dangerously, clattering back to earth. That's the reality of tornadoes; *Twisters* captures it, in places even incorporating footage of real-life twisters.

There are human stars, too, of course. Edgar-Jones' Kate, much like Helen Hunt's Jo in the original, is an Oklahoma-born weather scientist who has always dreamed of finding a way to lessen the severity of tornadoes and thus save lives. She meets her match in Powell's swagging Tyler, a cocky former rodeo rider from Arkansas—though in reality, he too is a science nerd who seeks to save lives.

Chung is an earnest filmmaker, and this is one area where his ideals may be a liability: it's not enough for these characters just to obsessively chase down crazy weather; they must also spend the proper amount of time expressing angst over the damage it can do. *Twisters* is kind of a sweet movie, even as it invites us to relish the usual disaster-film stuff, like bodies being cruelly flung into the air and sucked into oblivion. Chung can't fully resolve those two elements.

But there's no doubt about his love for the movie's setting. *Minari* was drawn from Chung's experience: when he was a kid, his Korean-born parents moved the family from Atlanta to a small farm in rural Arkansas. *Minari* was shot in Oklahoma, as *Twisters* was, but it's a corner of the world in which Chung feels completely at home. Even with its CGI'd tornadoes, the landscape still feels visceral and vital, a wide-open expanse of red-dirt roads and skies streaked with melancholy-elegant gray clouds.

From an economic standpoint, of course it matters whether *Twisters* is a hit or not: you can hate the monolith known as the industry, but the sad reality is that anyone who cares about seeing movies on the big screen has a stake in that industry's survival. At one point Kate stands in the center of a wind-ruffled plain, having detected an approaching storm. "Man," she says, "I love Oklahoma!" That's a big sentiment, just made to play out on a big screen. With *Twisters*, Chung puts all his faith in the big-screen idea, and in the staggering beauty of the open sky. Maybe that's a gamble. Or maybe it's just a way of looking up and out, a way of stretching the boundaries of what you thought you could do. And you can't put a price tag on that. □



From top: Zhao, Gerwig, Johnson, and Trevorrow at work

REVIEW

An audacious new read of *The Decameron*

BY JUDY BERMAN

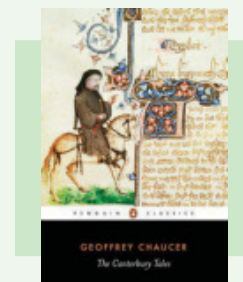
IN THE ANNUS HORRIBILIS OF 2020, AS COVID-19 RAVAGED the world, a generation that had yet to experience a cataclysm of precisely this scale turned to art for insight into how we might survive it. Contemporary speculative fiction about lethal pathogens, from Ling Ma's novel *Severance* to Steven Soderbergh's movie *Contagion*, surged in popularity. Readers also turned to tales of pestilence past: Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*. But no dusty tome got a bigger boost than Giovanni Boccaccio's early-Renaissance classic *The Decameron*. Virtual book clubs sprung up to dissect it. The *New York Times* commissioned stories from Margaret Atwood and Tommy Orange for its own *Decameron Project*. "Six Centuries Later, *The Decameron* Is Suddenly the Book of the Moment," *Vogue* reported.

Set amid the Black Death that decimated Europe in the mid-14th century, Boccaccio's masterpiece follows 10 young nobles fleeing an outbreak in Florence that would ultimately reduce the city's population by half. To pass the time in their rural idyll, they tell the stories that make up the bulk of the book—one apiece for 10 days, hence the title. The consensus interpretation of *The Decameron* is that it illustrates the power of storytelling to buoy us through history's horrors. The author Rivka Galchen sums up this reading in her *Decameron Project* introduction: "Reading stories in difficult times is a way to understand those times, and also a way to persevere through them."

Kathleen Jordan, the creator of Netflix's *The Decameron*, came away from her pandemic-era reading of Boccaccio with a different understanding. What if, her black comedy proposes, the book's true timeless message is that whether they're Florentine aristocrats in 1348 or Manhattan financiers in 2020, the privileged will always blithely abandon their less fortunate neighbors when the plague comes to town? Jordan has stripped *The Decameron* of its stories, choosing instead to riff on the frame narrative. Somehow, her irreverence pays off. While successful on its own terms, the series also raises the question of which derivative works, devoured by platforms hungry to capitalize on trending intellectual property (especially if it predates copyright law), even deserve to be called adaptations.

THE DECAMERON WITHOUT STORIES sounds about as promising as *The Inferno* without circles of hell, but if anyone can pull off an impossible premise, it's Jordan and fellow executive producer Jenji Kohan. With *Orange Is the New Black*, Kohan reshaped a middle-class white writer's prison memoir into a dark yet vibrant ensemble dramedy of carceral injustice starring the Black and brown women disproportionately ensnared in that system. Jordan and Kohan's

SINCE ITS COMPLETION IN 1353, artists working in all genres and mediums have adapted, updated, and drawn inspiration from *The Decameron*



THE CANTERBURY TALES

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
Late 14th century

The spoiled discover that they are the spoils

Teenage Bounty Hunters proved that when executed with enough warmth and wit, even the stupidest-sounding concept can yield a wonderful show.

The same audacious humor suffuses their *Decameron*. Like the original, the series opens in the corpse-strewn wasteland of 1348 Florence, as a handful of nobles and their servants prepare to skip town and wait out the plague at a luxurious country villa. The characters share names with Boccaccio's brigade, but little else. Zosia Mamet and *Derry Girls* star Saoirse-Monica Jackson are perfectly paired as Pampinea, a bossy 28-year-old so desperate to marry, she's accepted a proposal from the villa's owner sight unseen, and her weirdly loyal maid, Misia. Tindaro (Douggee McMeekin), a pompous hypochondriac who's just inherited a fortune, arrives with his hot physician, Dioneo (Amar Chadha-Patel) in tow. Canny Panfilò (Karan Gill) and pious Neifile (Lou Gala) are the married lovebirds—but neither can stop staring at Dioneo. Then there's bratty Filomena (Jessica Plummer) and her long-suffering servant Licisca (*Sex Education* standout Tanya Reynolds), whose mistress gets her to leave the deathbed of Filomena's own father by claiming he's already dead.

Upon arriving at the villa, the party finds their host absent but his accommodating steward (the great Tony Hale) and surly, noble-hating cook (Leila Farzad, a standout) at their service. No matter; the rich kids are determined to have a fun holiday even as the plague shreds the fabric of civilization. "We are here to eat and drink and move into a bright new future,"



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
1601–1605



ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL

JOHN KEATS
1818



THE DECAMERON

DIR. PIER PAOLO PASOLINI
1971



THE LITTLE HOURS

DIR. JEFF BAENA
2017

says the delusional Pampinea—who eagerly assumes the role of hostess.

That is precisely what they do for a while, guzzling wine and indulging in the kind of innocently illicit sex-capades that Boccaccio’s virtuous characters only told tall tales about. (As with most streaming series, *The Decameron*’s episodes and season are excessively long.) As their employees labor to satisfy the bosses’ absurd whims, the nobles seize the moment as an opportunity for self-discovery. “If the pestilence has taught us anything,” says a character trying to lure Panfilo out of the closet, “it’s that we’re to choose the parts of ourselves we wish to keep and the parts we wish to throw away.” It’s a great philosophy if you’re confident you’ll survive. But the assumption that wealth and seclusion

alone are infallible defenses against a pandemic is hopelessly naive. In truth, the villa has never been a safe refuge, and its gates are useless against not just the infected but also the marauding mobs it has empowered. One great thrill of Jordan’s earthy and hilarious *Decameron* is watching the spoiled discover that for the filthy horde circling their oasis, they are the spoils.

IS THE SHOW really *The Decameron*, though? In fairness, it would be virtually impossible to adapt the 860-page, 100-story volume in full. When admirers borrow from it, as Shakespeare did with *All’s Well That Ends Well* and, as recently as 2017, filmmaker Jeff Baena did in *The Little Hours*, they usually appropriate just a story or two. Even relatively faithful adaptations

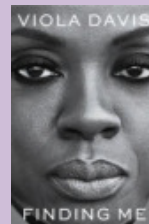
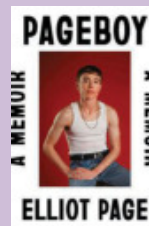
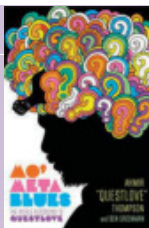
like the Italian auteur Pier Paolo Pasolini’s 1971 film *The Decameron* depict just a small selection of its tales. Still, there’s something about the idea of taking Boccaccio’s title but leaving his stories that doesn’t sit right.

Hollywood’s eagerness to slap a familiar, if unearned, title on every project is one red flag. (Look no further than the horror monstrosity *Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey*.) Yet Jordan has solid justification. While the brief stories didn’t strike her as right for TV, she has said she “loved the armature and skeleton” around them, “a group of wealthy people who think that they can escape a pandemic.” It’s through this COVID-informed interpretation that she accesses the soul of the work. Her *Decameron* doesn’t just reference the famous story where an adulterer hides from his lover’s husband in a barrel; it also captures the author’s ribald wit, his scorn for a corrupt Church, the glee with which his characters scheme and transgress, his prescient insight about a pandemic’s potential to remake society.

It isn’t fidelity to the letter, or even the basic structure, of the source material that makes a worthy adaptation. What matters more is that the retelling embodies the spirit of the work that inspired it. In the best cases, like this one, it also challenges received wisdom about that work. As Licisca, the show’s sharpest character, notes, “Independence is the greatest luxury.” Her revelation applies as much to a 21st century TV creator adapting the Western canon as it does to a servant fleeing her tyrannical mistress while the plague consumes their city. □



Delusional noblewoman Pampinea (Mamet, left) and her loyal minion Misia (Jackson) make an ideal co-dependent duo



BOOKS

The best celebrity memoirs to read this summer—and all year long

BY SHANNON CARLIN

OPEN**ANDRE AGASSI**

This thrillingly untriumphant 2009 sports memoir, co-written with J.R. Moehringer (see also: Prince Harry's memoir), covers the highs and lows of the bad boy of tennis, calling out on-court rivals and delving into off-court troubles. He even declares his hatred for tennis, detailing his father's abusive training tactics that caused him to loathe the sport.

ALL ABOUT ME!: MY REMARKABLE LIFE IN SHOW BUSINESS

MEL BROOKS

The comic auteur wields his delightful humor in stories about being a teen comedian in the Catskills, writing for volatile funny guy Sid Caesar, and the legendary *Blazing Saddles* flatulence scene. He makes clear that comedy wasn't the love of his life—that honor belongs to his late wife Anne Bancroft, to whom the 2021 book is a touching salute.

THE MEANING OF MARIAH CAREY

MARIAH CAREY

The pop icon with a five-octave vocal range reflects on her life and career, with help from journalist Michaela Angela Davis, diving headlong into her difficult childhood, turbulent first marriage to music executive Tommy Mottola, and mental-health struggles. But the 2020 memoir isn't all dark; she offers unguarded insight into her romance with Derek Jeter and her love of Christmas.

FINDING ME

VIOLA DAVIS

Davis recalls her journey to becoming the unflappable person and performer she is now, detailing how bullying she

endured from mostly white classmates later drove her to succeed at Juilliard, where she advocated on behalf of Black students. It's fitting that the audiobook version won her a Grammy in 2023, making Davis one of 19 people to clinch an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony.

CHRONICLES: VOLUME ONE

BOB DYLAN

Dylan was never known for waxing poetic about his life and career. That is, until his eye-opening 2004 memoir, in which he rambles on (in a good way) about his journey from complete unknown to voice of a generation (a label he's not so fond of).

WISHFUL DRINKING**CARRIE FISHER**

Adapted from her one-woman show, Fisher's 2008 memoir takes a self-deprecating look at the *Star Wars* actor's stranger-than-fiction life as the daughter of two Hollywood eccentrics, *Singin' in the Rain*'s Debbie Reynolds and crooner (and onetime husband of Elizabeth Taylor) Eddie Fisher.

LADY SINGS THE BLUES**BILLIE HOLIDAY**

While Holiday's recollections may not always be factually accurate, those who knew her say it was all emotionally true. It's what makes the 1956 book, released three years before her death at 44 and the basis for the 1972 film starring Diana Ross, such a heartbreaking self-portrait of a legend gone too soon.

ME**ELTON JOHN**

This deliciously dishy 2019 memoir tells how a shy English schoolboy named Reginald Dwight became the

bespectacled and bedazzled Captain Fantastic. His humility about ups (coming out, his advocacy) and downs (drug addiction, tragic loss of friends Princess Diana and Gianni Versace) makes this a charming swan song by a glitter rock icon.

I'M GLAD MY MOM DIED

JENNETTE MCCURDY

The former child actor takes a darkly humorous look at the physical, emotional, and verbal abuse she suffered at the hands of her mother. The 2022 book is no easy read, but McCurdy manages to find empathy and understanding for the woman who often made her young life a living hell.

RITA MORENO: A MEMOIR**RITA MORENO**

In this 2013 account, the EGOT winner covers everything from her childhood in Puerto Rico through her acting resurgence as an octogenarian. She spills Hollywood tea in the process, about prejudice she faced and famous romances (she devotes three chapters to Marlon Brando).

BORN A CRIME**TREVOR NOAH**

The former *Daily Show* host recounts growing up with a white father and a Black mother during the final years of apartheid South Africa in his best-selling 2016 autobiography. More than just Noah's origin story, it's a tender tribute to the fearless and fiercely religious woman who raised him.

PAGEBOY**ELLIOT PAGE**

In 2023, three years after he came out as transgender on the cover of *TIME*, Page released a no-holds-barred look at his journey to understand his identity. He recalls

body dysmorphia, disordered eating, and, eventually, finding a place in Hollywood.

MO' META BLUES

QUESTLOVE

To say Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson loves music is an understatement. And in his kaleidoscopic 2013 memoir, he explores how he went from being a devoted fan to a hip-hop historian, revisiting his favorite music memories, from hearing "Rapper's Delight" for the first time with his sister to rushing home to tape Prince's "Housequake" off the radio.

LIFE**KEITH RICHARDS**

It has been said that the only things that will survive nuclear war are cockroaches and Keith Richards. With the chaotic glee of a merry prankster, the guitarist's 2010 book offers context as to why that might be true. He recalls his days on the road with the Rolling Stones, complains (a lot) about Mick Jagger, details former drug habits, and reminisces about the loves of his life.

JUST KIDS**PATTI SMITH**

The punk icon dwells in the Chelsea Hotel in the late 1960s, where she and photographer Robert Mapplethorpe lived while pursuing their bohemian dreams. The 2010 memoir includes stories of run-ins with notable figures like Allen Ginsberg and details how Mapplethorpe, who died in 1989 of complications from AIDS, made her feel as if she could do anything.

MY NAME IS BARBRA**BARBRA STREISAND**

At nearly 1,000 pages, Streisand's long-awaited

2023 memoir leaves no stone unturned when it comes to the funny girl turned funnier lady. She covers her life, career, and the food she ate along the way. For even more Babs: the audio-book version includes stories that didn't make it to print.

TREJO: MY LIFE OF CRIME, REDEMPTION, AND HOLLYWOOD
DANNY TREJO

Trejo recounts his unlikely journey from convicted felon to celebrated character actor known for playing tough guys on projects like *Desperado* and *Breaking Bad*. The 2021 book doesn't sugarcoat the details of an abusive childhood, heroin addiction, and time spent in San Quentin and Folsom prisons, but it also celebrates his highs, most of which came after finding sobriety.

TASTE: MY LIFE THROUGH FOOD
STANLEY TUCCI

Make yourself a shaken, not stirred Negroni—the way Tucci prefers—and enjoy the actor and cookbook author's culinary-focused memoir about his journey from struggling actor and bartender to Hollywood gourmand, and all the meals he loved in between.

JUST AS I AM
CICELY TYSON

Released two days before her death at 96 in 2021, Tyson's memoir offers a candid look at a one-of-a-kind actor and cultural icon, from her parents' troubled marriage to her teenage pregnancy, her first Oscar nomination to her tormented relationship with Miles Davis.

YOU GOT ANYTHING STRONGER?
GABRIELLE UNION

With her second memoir in essays, published in 2021, Union delves deeper into topics like IVF and suicidal ideation, balancing darker stories with more hopeful and sometimes silly ones, about her daughter Zaya Wade's journey to coming out as transgender and the bathroom emergency she suffered at a strip club.

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Snoop Dogg The legendary rapper on covering the Summer Olympics for NBC, being “a very legal guy,” and the horse he wants to meet

When NBC came to you about this gig reporting on the Games from Paris, why did you sign on? Why not? Not why. This is what I do, you know what I’m saying? I love being in front of the people. I love sports. I know what I’m talking about. The network is appealing enough to understand that we deserve each other. So we’re gonna make magic.

And what do you plan to bring to NBC’s coverage that maybe we haven’t seen before? The fire and the smoke.

What do you mean by that? You figure it out. I’m pretty sure you’ve been doing this sh-t long enough to figure out what I mean by that. [Laughs.]

During the Tokyo Games, your equestrian commentary went viral. Do you plan to try equestrian at all? Me and horses, I’m gonna let them dance while I talk.

I saw somewhere that you’re going to try to meet the horse you said was *crip* walking in Tokyo. Yes, I’m definitely trying to meet him. Hopefully he’s in the Olympics so I can say, “What’s happening?” to him. Bring him a couple of carrots, some apples or somethin’.

How’s your French? Have you been working on it? Nah, I don’t think I have to. I think they like my language, you know what I’m sayin’? They’re going to convert to me. I’m going to translate to them what we’re talking about.

U.S. track star Sha’Carri Richardson had a big setback before the last Olympics, as she missed the Games for testing positive for cannabis, which is on the sport’s banned list. Do you think cannabis

What made you fall in love with the Olympics?

We only had so much. It’s not like now, where you got so many different things you can watch and social media and all that sh-t. There was only one TV, so whatever one member of the family was watching, we were all forced to watch. The Olympics would take over the whole house. And it’s special ‘cause they’re representing the country. That meant a lot, watching it as a kid.



is performance-enhancing in track and field? Nah, I just ran a 34.44 in the 200 meters, and I was smoking all night. So that sh-t ain’t got nothing to do with helping my time at all. It f-cked my time up, if anything. Unless they got some supersh-t to get you faster. Let me know where it is and I’ll be the first to try.

Cannabis is illegal in France. Not sure you knew that. Yeah, yeah. Trust me, I’m a very legal guy. I plan on going out there and doing NBC Olympic work. Being clean as a book, clean as the athletes. They can test me if they want to. I’m going to be out there doing what I’m supposed to be doing to make sure I bring home the gold. Which is me.

Any international Olympians you’re excited to see in Paris? The Australian swim team, up against the Americans. They push us to the limit. And I like Jamaica’s track team. And Canada’s basketball team. They got a shot to get to the gold-medal round, but they’re not going to win it. They got a shot ‘cause they’ve got a bunch of NBA players who are really seasoned and on top of their game. But the overall factor is going to be, the USA is the dogs. We’re not going to lose to no puppies.

What is the Snoop perspective you can bring to the Games that nobody else can? It’s just me. It’s hard to explain. I can’t say it’s going to be a bag of potato chips, Kool-Aid, but I know it’s me. Put some plastic around me and let me come there, I do what I do. You can sell me. I’m sold.

Anything I didn’t ask or you want to say? Nah, I’m just going out there to have a good time. *Potpourri. Comment allez-vous. Oui oui.* And all of the above. —SEAN GREGORY

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